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# Sites of Possibility: Political Subjectivity and Processes of Self-Representation in Rio de Janeiro's Favelas

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SITES OF POSSIBILITY:  
POLITICAL SUBJECTIVITY AND PROCESSES OF SELF-REPRESENTATION IN RIO DE  
JANEIRO'S FAVELAS

by

LINDSEY O'CONNOR

B.F.A. Birmingham-Southern College, 2010

A thesis submitted to the Faculty  
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This thesis entitled:

Sites of Possibility: Political Subjectivity and Processes of Self-Representation in Rio de Janeiro's Favelas

written by Lindsey O'Connor

Has been approved for the Department of Art & Art History

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A final copy of this thesis has been examined by the signatories, and we find that both the content and the form meet acceptable presentation standards of scholarly work in the above mentioned discipline.

HRC Protocol # \_\_\_\_\_

Lindsey O'Connor (M.A., Art and Art History)

Sites of Possibility: Political Subjectivity and Processes of Self-Representation in Rio de Janeiro's Favelas

Thesis directed by Assistant Professor Kira van Lil

This paper aims to further interrogate the already precarious position of Brazil's favelas, or informal squatter communities. Due to Rio de Janeiro's role as the host of the 2014 FIFA World Cup and 2016 Olympics, the city government has been forced to rethink their attitudes towards favelas. This thesis claims that arts-based projects in the favelas exist in and through states of uncertainty, which is elucidated by the fact that the communities themselves exist in states of uncertainty due to police occupations and government sponsored upgrading programs that aim to make the favelas more palatable to the communities' international and local critics. While favelas are normally considered dystopias, I claim that they are critical utopias that both critique existing realities and offer alternatives and possibilities through which diverse people can comfortably co-exist. My discussion focuses on public projects that incorporate participation, community building, and placemaking in an attempt to legitimize auto-construction and defend against displacement. Throughout my discussion, I stress that the affective possibilities of socially engaged projects in the favelas emerge from processes of self-representation, and the issue of who is operating or initiating these projects falls second to the matter of who is speaking.



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## Introduction

### I. Controversy, Christ, and the King

Michael Jackson's 1996 music video for the embattled anthem *They Don't Care About Us* was among the first representations of Rio de Janeiro's favelas, or informal squatter communities, in Western pop culture. Directed by Spike Lee and set in the Santa Marta favela, the video and lyrics speak to extreme police brutality, government indifference, and the criminalization of poverty by the middle and upper classes. The video featured Jackson dancing in the favela with thousands of local residents while hundreds of Rio's stoic military police apathetically observe; meanwhile, like a battle hymn, Jackson chants about socio-economic segregation, racial and ethnic bigotry, and violence. While Jackson's presence in the favelas was so celebrated that he was greeted with a samba-like reception and a statue was later erected in his honor (fig. 1), the "King of Pop's" arrival was not met with enthusiasm by local governments. Ronaldo Cezar Coelho, the state secretary for Industry, Commerce and Tourism claimed that Jackson's exposure of the favelas would damage the city's reputation, and Coelho demanded editing rights over the final video. While the city took legal action to prevent filming, courts ruled that Jackson held full creative control over the location and content of his music video.<sup>1</sup>

Meanwhile, reports began to surface that Jackson had negotiated rights to film in Santa Marta favela with the local drug traffickers, the Commando Vermelho, or Red Command. For a sizable sum, the Red Command ensured Jackson's safety in the community enlisting locals as security detail. Rio's newspapers and government officials decried the incident claiming that Jackson's negotiations and video would negatively impact the city's tourism industry, and more importantly, the city's chance to host the 2004 Olympic games. Interestingly, this was not the

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<sup>1</sup> Diana Jean Schemo, "Rio Frets as Michael Jackson Plans to Film Slum," *New York Times*, February 11, 1996, accessed March 13, 2012, <http://www.nytimes.com/1996/02/11/world/rio-frets-as-michael-jackson-plans-to-film-slum.html?pagewanted=all>.

last time that favela residents would find themselves marginalized by the government's self-interest in Olympic politics. Condemning Jackson's willingness to publicize the city's ugly underbelly, Cristina Becker of the Rio Convention Bureau said, "We've always oriented producers to show the good that Rio has. If Michael Jackson only wants to show the bad side, it's better that he not come."<sup>2</sup> Indeed, as Jackson's *They Don't Care About Us* resulted in a political tumult, it becomes clear that the representation of Rio de Janeiro's favelas coincides with government anxieties surrounding the communities' growing agency.

Nonetheless, the cultural climate in Rio de Janeiro has slowly changed since Michael Jackson's music video debacle. The city's favelas receive increasing visibility as public art, non-governmental organizations, and community museums highlight the favelas as places of culture and tourism. However, informal communities are still discernably not part of the formal city, the tension of which is perhaps best represented in the juxtaposition of Michael Jackson's statue in Santa Marta and the city's iconic Christ Redeemer (fig. 2). Both statues stand bare chested with arms outstretched overlooking quintessential Rio cityscapes. However, Christ and the King crystallize two very different ideologies. The one hundred and twenty-five foot Christ Redeemer, considered a New Wonder of the World, represents the official, formal city; the *Cidade Maravilhosa*, or Marvelous City depicted in travel brochures. Conversely, Michael Jackson's life-size statue, erected shortly after the singer's death, is a monument to adversity relegated to the unseen city, the favela. This antagonism between Christ and Jackson's monument perhaps best demonstrates the contentious relationship between formal and informal communities that persists.

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<sup>2</sup> Ibid.

## II. Methodology: Favelas as Sites for Possibility

Brazil's favelas, now notorious from highly publicized police occupations and drug trafficking, are largely considered dystopias, perpetually depraved places marked by violence and fear. However, this thesis aims to resignify the favela as a critical utopia, that is, a space capable of critiquing the current order of things in order to achieve a more cohesive, inclusive society. Distinctly different from the imaginary, idealist utopia, critical utopias do not aspire towards perfection; they reveal alternatives to the present, alternatives to official notions of an ideal society. Utopian literature scholar Tom Moylan recognizes the critical utopia as a self-reflexive method capable of undermining hegemony:

The critical utopias give voice to an emerging radical perception and experience that emphasizes process over system, autonomous and marginal activity over the imposed order of a center, human liberation over white/phallogentric control, and the interrelationships of nature over human chauvinism—and they give voice to the seditious utopian impulse itself. The critical utopias still describe alternative societies, but they are careful to consider the flaws and insufficiencies of these systems.<sup>3</sup>

Critical utopias are useful alternatives aiming to analyze the present rather than the notion of the utopia as an ideal, unattainable construction.<sup>4</sup> More specifically, favelas, through public art, community-based social organization, and demonstrations of heritage and identity, transform into critical utopias through an insistence on possibilities. Indeed, these possibilities are plural in both form and content; there are several avenues through which change can occur, and the notion of possibility is not relegated to the realm of positive or affirming change. Possibility encompasses a diverse range of alternatives to the present world, but never a world without alternatives.<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>3</sup> Tom Moylan, *Demand the Impossible: Science Fiction and the Utopian Imaginary*, (London: Routledge, 1987), 211.

<sup>4</sup> Ashlie Lancaster, "Instantiating Critical Utopia," *Utopian Studies* 11 (2000): 112.

<sup>5</sup> Boaventura de Sousa Santos discusses the World Social Forum as a type of critical utopia. The World Social Forum is an organization that lobbies for the emerging notion of counterhegemonic, as opposed to neoliberal,

I argue that it is through the realm of possibility, rather than certainty, that creative projects operate in Rio de Janeiro's favelas. In these historically marginalized squatter communities, architectural projects, public art, and community museums call attention to the affective possibilities emanating from critical engagements with human rights, creative uses of space, notions of home and belonging, and the everyday practices that help maintain a livable life. Looking specifically at public projects that incorporate participation, community-building, and placemaking, this paper will explore the diverse ways in which people simultaneously strive to legitimize auto-construction and defend against displacement and exclusion.<sup>6</sup> The projects I have selected, though diverse in methodology, scope, and final product, are connected through a palpable sense of possibility, more specifically, the possibility of social transformation, of becoming.

As a conditional and fluctuating locus, the favela is a space that is constantly in a state of becoming; it is never a fixed and finished location. While favelas are indeed communities contingent upon a complex web of economic, social, cultural, and racial factors, perhaps it is more applicable to imagine them as communities organized around the concept of destination as opposed to one of origin.<sup>7</sup> The unfixed-ness of the favela contributes to people's reliance on alternative ways of remembering history and practicing identity. Nicholas Bourriaud describes globalization and ways of deflecting its homogenizing pressures:

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globalization. Based on the global-local needs of social movements and nongovernmental organizations, the WSF believes that an alternative world, free from oppression, exclusion, and domination, is possible. His critical framework based on the notion of the organization as a critical utopia is in opposition to the conservative utopia of neoliberalism. Conservative Utopias deny alternatives to present reality, and the possibility of alternatives is discredited on the basis that the promise of change is unrealistic. Boaventura de Sousa Santos goes on to claim that many of Western modernity's critical utopias have transformed into conservative utopias due to an insistence that the fulfillment of utopia is already occurring. Santos, Boaventura de Sousa. "The World Social Forum: A User's Manual." [http://www.ces.uc.pt/bss/documentos/fsm\\_eng.pdf](http://www.ces.uc.pt/bss/documentos/fsm_eng.pdf), 11.

<sup>6</sup> I use the term auto-construction throughout this text to reference favela homes as self-built structures. It is key that auto-construction be recognized as a legitimate way of placemaking.

<sup>7</sup> Nicholas Bourriaud, *The Radicant* (London: Verso, 2006), 40.

The “ground” is giving way; we are told to compromise our rituals, our culture, and our history, now confined to standardized urban contexts that no longer reflect any image of us [...] Where can [history] be rediscovered? In portable practices. It is the domain of everyday lifestyles—images, clothing, cuisine, and rituals—that immigrants tinker, far from the gaze of the master’s soil, piecing together a fragile and deracinated culture whose essential quality is that it is detachable.<sup>8</sup>

In a time and space where methods of self-defining become muddled, social and cultural practices are transformed into modes of remembering and enacting identity.<sup>9</sup> Unfixedness, possibility, and metamorphosis coalesce in favelas where land, history, and identity exist in states of uncertainty. Instead of a group from the same place, the favela is a community of people going the same place.<sup>10</sup> Therefore, facile notions of shared history or collective identity are rendered moot in discussions on informality due to the tumultuous and fluctuating nature of favelas and the diversity of their populations.

Because public art has been historically utilized as a way to test democracy, citizenship, and ideas of social belonging, my first chapter deals with the diverse ways in which these themes have been negotiated in Rio de Janeiro through creative community-based collaborations and government regulated urban spatial control. I focus on Françoise Schein’s public participatory works that emphasize the importance of basic human rights in the favela resident’s plight to

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<sup>8</sup> Ibid., 33.

<sup>9</sup> Lucy Lippard’s *The Lure of the Local* is a useful counterpoint to Bourriaud’s idea of the radican or nomad capable of growing roots as it progresses forward. Lippard examines how globalization, post-nationalism, and capitalist expansion have contributed to the departicularization of place. She claims that places are becoming more homogenous as cultural differences are being erased, and this process only creates more generic spaces capable of accommodating neoliberal expansion. She claims that forced and voluntary migrations have left people uprooted and detached from their identities. Therefore, Lippard posits a return to the values associated with place as the antidote to alienation. Despite a constantly changing universe, Lippard claims that we can relocate ourselves by investing in distinct and local identities. In comparison, Bourriaud’s subject is an active agent in her identity formation while Lippard’s nostalgic view of place results in people who passively absorb their identities. Bourriaud’s radican is capable of rethinking and reconstructing new ways of being despite location, but Lippard’s subject seems more interested in a return to a simplistic, romantic, and overly sentimental way of life that is contingent on location. These different ways of configuring identity and subjectivity are just a few of the diverse responses dealing with how to redefine the importance, or lack thereof, of place in a globalized world where local and national boundaries are disintegrating. Lucy Lippard, *The Lure of the Local: Senses of Place in a Multicentered Society* (New York: The New Press, 1997).

<sup>10</sup> Bourriaud, *The Radican*, 43.

become *gente*, a person worthy of dignity and respect. It is through this concept recognized by sociologist Janice Perlman in her text *Favela: Four Decades of Living on the Edge in Rio de Janeiro* that I frame my argument that human rights are a pretext for a truly democratic public sphere. Drawing on Rosalyn Deutsche's claim that democracy is a state of sustained conflict, I contend that Françoise Schein's works do not aim for resolution or cohesion, but instead help facilitate Nina Möntmann's idea of a new community in which the only precondition to belong is existence in the world.<sup>11</sup>

In my second chapter, I focus on processes of seeing and being seen and question whether favelas' participation in visual practices helps incorporate the communities into the formal city, rendering it an intelligible place. Focusing on three favela-based projects that incorporate visibility, territoriality, and the politics of auto-construction, I explore ways in which people re-vision the favela and its place within the city. I emphasize Paulo Freire's *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* and the author's discussion of the importance of creativity and subjectivity in the creation of first-person narratives that motivate an internal critical consciousness.<sup>12</sup> Furthermore, drawing on Walter Mignolo's *The Idea of Latin America*, I claim that first-person narratives should critique notions of hegemonic knowledge, center and periphery, and "the coloniality of being" in order to construct another world that opposes past principles that help enforce marginalization.<sup>13</sup> I conclude that creative projects that help re-vision the city through first-person narratives contribute to the construction of another city based on a politics of difference.

Finally, my third chapter deals with favela museums as divisive sites that simultaneously incite outrage, political subjectivity, and alternative understandings of history. I understand these institutions as evidence of the positive aspects of globalization and post-colonialism that

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<sup>11</sup> Nina Möntmann, "New Communities." *Public* 39 (Spring, 2009).

<sup>12</sup> Paulo Freire, *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* (New York: Continuum, 2000).

<sup>13</sup> Walter Mignolo, *The Idea of Latin America* (Maden, MA: Blackwell Publishing, 2005).

speaks to the changing role of the favela within the urban fabric. Using Henri Lefebvre's *The Production of Space* as a lens through which to view notions of tourism, reappropriation, and creative uses of space,<sup>14</sup> I claim that favela museums are a curious blend of local and global that help subvert center/periphery binaries through the resignification of simple acts of being and doing. Furthermore, I draw upon Ronald Lee Fleming's notions of placemaking detailed in his text *The Art of Placemaking: Interpreting Community Through Public Art and Urban Design* as a way to discuss the egalitarian idea of favelas as places worth commemorating.<sup>15</sup> I conclude that successful favela museums manipulate the processes of globalization to transform everyday practices into opportunities through which stories, heritage, and identity can be demonstrated.

### **III. Grounding Within the Discipline**

In terms of participation in art, this thesis is situated methodologically and historically around recent forms of participatory practices that deal specifically with alternative modes of creating communities. However, it is important to recognize that the notion of participation is by no means a revolutionary concept. Marcel Duchamp's 1957 text "The Creative Act" details the importance of the viewer in mobilizing the work of art. Indeed, Duchamp recognizes that the artist is not the sole author-genius, but instead the viewer has a distinct role deciphering and breathing life into the work.<sup>16</sup> Therefore, it seems plausible that many of the artists and art practices discussed below are in dialogue with the notion that the creation of art as an essentially participatory act.

Recently, artists and art historians have responded to the increasing number of participatory artworks through a series of critical redefinitions of the parameters of contemporary

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<sup>14</sup> Henri Lefebvre, *The Production of Space*, (Hoboken: Wiley-Blackwell, 1992).

<sup>15</sup> Ronald Lee Fleming, *The Art of Placemaking: Interpreting Community Through Public Art and Urban Design*, (London: Merrell, 2007).

<sup>16</sup> Marcel Duchamp, "The Creative Act," in *Marcel Duchamp*, edited by Robert Lebel (New York: Paragraphic Books, 1959).



art.<sup>17</sup> However, in terms of my discussion, the most relevant of these trends is Nicolas Bourriaud's concept of relational aesthetics, and more specifically, the intradisciplinary conversations emerging in response to Bourriaud's claims. Relational aesthetics deals with artworks aiming to construct networks that exist outside of mass communication, as the realm of human interaction becomes the method and medium. Bourriaud's concept, often used to describe the works of Rirkrit Tiravanija, Liam Gillick, and Pierre Huyghe, tries to foster relationships between people that reach over and above institutional forms while eroding the notion of private space for individual formal consumption. Easily conflated with earlier performance-based works or happenings in the 1960s and 70s that emphasize experience and embodiment, Bourriaud claims that the fundamental difference between early works and relational aesthetics is a new emphasis on social change. While early participatory art centers around utopian goals, Bourriaud claims that relational aesthetics focuses on uniting groups of people in an attempt to create microtopias through interactions and conversations. These microtopias are small, simple ways of "learning to inhabit the world in a better way" through a do-it-yourself ethics that privileges face-to-face interactions.<sup>18</sup>

Bourriaud's notion of relational aesthetics was perhaps most hotly contested by art historian Claire Bishop who claimed that the entire effort was a misreading of post-structuralist

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<sup>17</sup> For example, artist and author Suzanne Lacy coined the term New Genre Public Art, a practice that combines social responsibility and public art practices to create a work that is focused not on objects, but on the engagement between the artist and community. These works often take place far from the museum context in an attempt to engage real people through shared experiences, and the projects often deal with marginal groups and are meant to engender feelings of social responsibility. Rather than referencing the tradition of site-specificity, Lacy notes Russian constructivism and the Bauhaus as influences, and she links new genre works to vanguard groups, feminists, and Marxists who have an interest in politics, activism, communities, and collaboration. Similar to New Genre Public Art but with a focus on empathy and sensitivity, Suzy Gablik's concept of Connective Aesthetics evolves out of a dialogic structure that embraces traditional values and rejects modernist anti-participatory, anti-relational art practices. Connective Aesthetics champions ideas of compassion, care, and responding to needs through an emphasis on psychoanalysis and ecology as ways to promote healing. Finally, Grant Kester's Dialogic Art aims to bring together diverse communities and engender feelings of empathy of understanding. The projects he discusses create open spaces for questions and critiques that are grounded in the idea that what happens today will affect the future.

<sup>18</sup> Bourriaud, *Relational Aesthetics*, 13.

theory that proposes that interpretation, rather than the work itself, remain in constant flux.<sup>19</sup> She further criticizes Bourriaud claiming that his role as curator overshadows the artworks he promotes, and his fundamental misinterpretation of Umberto Eco's "The Open Work," which claims that all art holds the potential to be open due to contemporary conditions that foster unlimited readings, leads him to ignore issues of reception in lieu of artist intentionality. Also, Bourriaud claims that relational works must be judged according to the relations they produce, but Bishop recognizes that it is also the quality of these relationships that must be assessed.<sup>20</sup> She further criticizes relational art for parading under false senses of democracy claiming, "This may be a microtopia, but— like utopia—it is still predicated on the exclusion of those who hinder or prevent its realization."<sup>21</sup> Bishop concludes that relational works dwelling on harmonious interactions and social belonging are unsuccessful due to their inability to explore and sustain social tensions.<sup>22</sup>

The approach of this thesis lies betwixt and between Bourriaud and Bishop's ideas detailed above. While previous investigations of socially engaged trends in contemporary art remain focused on the participatory or collaborative relationships between audience and artist inside a gallery, my project does not deal discretely with artists and their works, but instead with the social practices that emerge from creative environments through grassroots and community-based activism. Indeed, in many of the projects I discuss, artist-lead participation often serves as a springboard for processes of self-representation. Therefore, this discussion focuses primarily

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<sup>19</sup> Claire Bishop, "Antagonism and Relational Aesthetics," *October* 110 (2004): 52.

<sup>20</sup> *Ibid.*, 65.

<sup>21</sup> *Ibid.*, 68.

<sup>22</sup> Curator Maria Lind responds to Bishop's analysis of relational aesthetics in her essay "The Collaborative Turn." She claims that Bishop's argument relies heavily on Chantal Mouffe's concept of the agonistic public sphere, which Bishop misrecognizes as the antagonistic public sphere. Therefore, Bishop formulates an essay that completely elides Mouffe's thesis to move beyond antagonism and embrace agonism as a way to understand conflicts, despite the fact that an analysis of Tiravanija's works through the lens of agonism may have been particularly enlightening. Maria Lind, "The Collaborative Turn," in *Taking the Matter into Common Hands: On Contemporary Art and Collaborative Practices*, edited by Johanna Billing et al. (London: Black Dog Publishing, 2007), 22.

on the politics of self-defining as the negotiations between artist and community fall second. Furthermore, moving beyond ideas of utopia and microtopia, I embrace a more discerning and subversive notion of critical utopia to understand human relationships. Through the lens of the critical utopia, the types and qualities of relationships are under constant scrutiny because remaining self-critical is a precondition to the generation of alternatives capable of destabilizing hegemony.

Already situated within current trends in participatory practices, this project is further located within the scope of art-historical discourse based on previous analyses of site-specific and space-related artworks. While the works that I discuss deal fundamentally with notions of place, it is not the site-specificity of an object that is of interest but rather the construction of site in the discursive realm. Art historian Miwon Kwon's *One Place After Another* dictates the framework for site-specific art that is not contingent on a literal place but a conceptual one. Kwon claims that discursive sites including ethnic history, identity politics, and the dynamics of sexuality become important in redefining the public roles of art and artists and differentiating site-oriented works with earlier examinations dealing with the phenomenological and institutional repercussions of site-specificity.<sup>23</sup> Therefore, this examination coincides conceptually with Kwon's notion of discursive site, but the projects explored contribute to a unique understanding of how these ideas operate within the context of informal communities.

Such a project takes on a particular urgency, I argue, as Brazil emerges as a BRIC economy, the acronymic term coined for Brazil, Russia, India, and China's recent debut as major economic powers. Events like the 2014 FIFA World Cup and the 2016 Olympics could transform Rio de Janeiro's landscape through either urban regeneration or gentrification, and so

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<sup>23</sup> Miwon, Kwon, *One Place After Another: Site Specific Art and Locational Identity*, (Cambridge: The MIT Press, 2004), 30.

the need to maintain socially, culturally, economically, and ethnically heterogeneous environments that reflect local needs and identities is palpable. Through the examination of interventions that motivate a local critical consciousness, this paper will document the dynamic geography of contemporary Brazil as the country is incorporated into the economic landscape of the “West.”

While I use contemporary Brazil as a lens through which to illuminate the complexities surrounding issues of democracy, belonging, and locality, this project functions as a case study on informality that could potentially be lifted and relocated to speak to similar issues occurring in diverse places.<sup>24</sup> While favelas as such are specific to Brazil, and their literal and conceptual construction is based on a series of social and cultural indicators reflective of state policy, informal communities are by no means distinct to Rio de Janeiro but are a phenomenon affecting large portions of the Global South. Formally and informally existing slums in China, India, Brazil, Nigeria, and Pakistan house nearly five hundred million people,<sup>25</sup> a number roughly equal to the entire population of North America. Indeed, at a time when the world’s population is growing significantly faster than originally projected, megacities with populations over eight million, and even more, megaslums with populations ranging from five hundred thousand to four million, are the new paradigm of urbanity.<sup>26</sup> Therefore, while the scope of my research is limited

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<sup>24</sup> The idea that this framework could be reapplied in various contexts is not unlike Okwui Enwezor’s approach to Documenta 11’s Platform 4 titled *Under Siege: Four African Cities, Freetown, Johannesburg, Kinshasa, Lagos*. Rather than discussing issues of urbanization, migration, displacement, and globalization as they apply to cities throughout the world, Enwezor uses Africa as a case study through which to illuminate these concepts. Indeed, both Enwezor’s and my exploration revolves around issues of overwhelming urban expansion and how unprecedented mass migrations are altering the landscape of the city. Furthermore, both theses aim to resignify places denigrated by political and economic inequality as locations of creativity that must be incorporated into the urban imaginary. Okwui Enwezor, *Under siege, four African cities, Freetown, Johannesburg, Kinshasa, Lagos : Documenta 11, Platform 4*, (Stuttgart: Hatje Cantz Publishers, 2002).

<sup>25</sup> Mike Davis, *Planet of Slums* (London: Verso, 2006), 24.

<sup>26</sup> *Ibid.*, 1.

to Rio de Janeiro, my methodological framework could be relevant to a series of studies on urban informality, squatting practices, and auto-construction.

#### IV. Historical Background and Current Cultural Climate

Favelas are informal squatter communities, the result of mass migrations from rural plantations to the city after the abolition of slavery in Brazil in 1888 (fig. 3). Considered unsightly aberrations from their onset, favelas were first officially recognized in 1937 building codes that prohibited the fabrication of future favelas and banned the use of permanent materials in their construction; therefore, the communities were simultaneously abjected from the formal city and forbidden attempts to construct proper homes. Again post-World War II, rural populations flocked to the city contributing to the vertical and horizontal expansion of existing favelas as well as the construction of new ones.<sup>27</sup> In 1964, a military coup resulted in a twenty-one year dictatorship during which the government strove to eradicate favelas through the building of *conjuntos*, or government sponsored apartment complexes.<sup>28</sup> However, with the restoration of democracy in 1985, it became clear that attempts to eliminate the favelas were futile.

During the mid-1980s, Rio de Janeiro's favelas increasingly came under the control of narco-traffickers, and the shantytowns became the backdrop for violence marked by guns, drugs, and frequent deadly police raids. The stigma of living in a favela only increased as locals became more involved in the drug trade, and the symptoms of poverty were criminalized to deny personhood to the urban poor; a common complaint from favela residents is that they are no

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<sup>27</sup> Janice Perlman, *Favela: Four Decades of Living on the Edge in Rio de Janeiro*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010), 28.

<sup>28</sup> A particularly infamous example of a *conjuntos* is the Cidade de Deus, or City of God, depicted in the 2002 Oscar-nominated film by the same name. While *conjuntos* strove to eliminate slum-like living conditions, the poorly constructed and improperly maintained apartments quickly fell into disrepair.

longer seen as people by the middle and upper classes.<sup>29</sup> According to polls, living in a favela is more disparaging than being dark skinned or a woman despite the fact that racist and chauvinist tendencies are growing national problems.<sup>30</sup>

Informal communities continue to grow significantly faster than the rest of Rio de Janeiro, and today the city is home to over one thousand favelas, most of which are precariously perched atop the city's famously mountainous landscape creating a very visible discrepancy between the favela and the industrialized neighborhoods below (fig. 4). In fact, a number of favelas occupy hills in the desirable *Zone Sul* alongside the most affluent neighborhoods in the city: Copacabana, Ipanema, and Leblon. A stark contrast to the western notion of the suburb, the favelas suffer from a severe lack of infrastructure<sup>31</sup> that contributes to the fact that migrations between *morro*, or hillside, and the *asfalto*, the paved streets below, are one-sided; the majority of Rio's residents have never visited a favela.<sup>32</sup> Despite Brazil's burgeoning economy, downward social mobility is prevalent,<sup>33</sup> and thus the favelas are seen as signifiers of the country's inability to overcome economic disparities and social inequalities.<sup>34</sup>

While the favelas were once invisible cities, ignored by the government and city elites, significant upgrading projects have recently altered the way in which formality and informality interact. The most significant upgrading effort is undoubtedly the Favela-Barrio Project working

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<sup>29</sup> Janice E. Perlman, "The Metamorphosis of Marginality: Four Generations in the Favelas of Rio de Janeiro," *Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Sciences* 606 (2006), 167.

<sup>30</sup> Perlman, "Metamorphosis of Marginality," 171.

<sup>31</sup> One example where this is less of a problem is in Rocinha, the largest favela in Rio de Janeiro. Rocinha has two city busses that run through the center of the 300,000 person community. The narco-traffickers that controlled the community until November 2011 enacted a number of beneficial programs (city busses and trash pickup are among the most notable) through their ties to the government. Renato da Silva, favela resident, in discussion with the author, October 27, 2012.

<sup>32</sup> Helen Clegg, "Rio de Janeiro's favelas reflected through art," *BBC News*, May 28, 2011, accessed November 22, <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-latin-america-13389594>.

<sup>33</sup> Perlman, "Metamorphosis of Marginality," 158.

<sup>34</sup> Beatriz Jaguaribe and Kevin Hetherington, "Favela tours: Indistinct and Mapless Representations of the Real in Rio de Janeiro," in *Tourism Mobilities: Places to Play, Places to Stay*, ed. Mimi Sheller et al (London: Routledge, 2004), 165.

through Rio de Janeiro's city government to transform one hundred and sixty-eight favelas into *barrios*, or formal neighborhoods. Initiated in 1994, fifteen favelas were chosen for the first phase of Favela-Barrio, and through an open call for proposals, fifteen teams were selected and assigned to communities. Phase II, which took place between 2000 and 2005, updated sixty-two favelas and twenty-four *loteamentos*, illegal or semi-legal settlements that are not considered *asfalto*, *morro*, or favela. Finally, Phase III, occurring between 2005 and 2008, brought the total number of favela residents affected by upgrades to over half a million.<sup>35</sup> The project provided informal communities with street signage, community centers, garbage collection, sewers, and metered electricity.<sup>36</sup> Furthermore, samba schools, skate parks, and soccer fields were installed to facilitate community gatherings. Favela-Barrio is commonly cited as the world's most ambitious squatter upgrading program, and in 2005, the program was awarded the United Nations prestigious World Habitat Award that celebrates innovative solutions to housing problems.<sup>37</sup> Regardless, while the infrastructural upgrades significantly improved the quality of life in the affected favelas, the project was unsuccessful in its ultimate goal to integrate the communities with the formal city; there is no question of where the rectilinear city ends and the curvilinear favela begins.

In 2009, in anticipation of the upcoming 2014 World Cup and 2016 Olympic Games set to take place in Rio de Janeiro, the city government announced their plan to launch a campaign

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<sup>35</sup> Janice Perlman, *Favela*, 276.

<sup>36</sup> Interestingly, metered electricity was a significant upgrade in favelas despite the fact that this means that residents have to pay an electricity bill as opposed to living off of stolen services. Metered electricity indicates that people in the favelas are residents in the city, and bills become records of existence. Isabel Erdman, favela resident, in discussion with the author, October 26, 2012.

<sup>37</sup> While the benefits that the Favela-Barrio Program have provided the favelas is undeniable, the program has a number of shortcomings. Only reaching 16.5% of Rio's favela populations, some reports claim that favela residents feel no ownership over their upgraded communities. Also, many of the daycares and healthcare facilities installed through the program have lost funding, and some sit empty. Many of the internal plazas and waterways have not been properly maintained, and now they are littered with garbage and graffiti. Perlman, *Favela*, 280.

to transform the favelas by improving living conditions through police force.<sup>38</sup> Police Pacification Unit's known as UPPs systematically occupied dozens of favelas ridding them of drugs, guns, and gangs. Notably, many of the occupied favelas are located in the *zona sul* near affluent neighborhoods and tourist hotspots, and due to the favelas' location in the hills, many communities boast excellent views of the city and have become sites for tourism. Vidigal and Chácara do Céu, the most recently pacified communities, bring the current number of UPPs in operation to nineteen. Therefore, through forcible entries and government initiated "cleanups," favela communities become more formalized and integrated, but also more prone to departicularization as boundaries between the *morro* and the *asfalto* become increasingly permeable. Furthermore, criticism of the UPPs remains mixed amongst favela citizens, many of whom question the city's sustained commitment to favela pacification after the World Cup and Olympics come to a close.<sup>39</sup>

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<sup>38</sup> Two weeks after the announcement that the 2016 Olympic games would take place in Rio de Janeiro, fourteen people were killed and a police helicopter was shot down in a violent brawl between police and narco-traffickers. Happening so soon after the OIC decision was announced, the event called attention to Rio as a city seemingly incapable of maintaining peace, and the safety of tourists in the city was called into question. Victoria Baena, "Favelas in the Spotlight: Transforming the Slums of Rio de Janeiro," *Harvard International Review* (Spring 2011): 34, accessed November 23.

<sup>39</sup> Renato da Silva, favela resident, in discussion with the author, October 27, 2012.



## 1. The Right to Belong: Negotiating Citizenship Through Public Art

### I. Government Spatial Control

“Who has the right to belong to the future of humanity, and who is condemned to disappear?”<sup>40</sup> This question posed by Laymert Garcia dos Santos conveys the anxieties surrounding issues of belonging, globalization, and citizenship prevalent in contemporary Latin America and more specifically, Rio de Janeiro’s favela communities. Favela residents have been historically viewed as non-people and favelas as non-places;<sup>41</sup> residents are emptied of any discernable identity once they cross the boundary between *asfalto* and *morro*. Indeed, the struggle to become *gente*, or “somebody,” a person worthy of dignity and respect, is noted by sociologist Janice Perlman as a strong desire among favela residents.<sup>42</sup> Therefore, community based and politically motivated projects operating in conjunction with Rio de Janeiro’s favelas consistently call attention to basic human rights as the foundation for social acceptance, but these works are in stark juxtaposition to a number of urban programs that only magnify the realities of social exclusion. By comparing recent alienating trends in urban planning with a series of public projects conceived by French artist Françoise Schein, I will identify how community-based art dealing with favela populations and human rights reaffirms an otherwise peripheral local identity

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<sup>40</sup> Laymert Garcia dos Santos, “Belonging and not Belonging,” in *Belonging and Globalisation: Critical Essays in Contemporary Art & Culture*, ed. Kamal Boullata, (London: SAQI, 2008).

<sup>41</sup> See Marc Augé’s *Non Places: An Introduction to the Anthropology of Supermodernity*. Non-places are another category of location that emerges as a result of globalization. Marc Augé speaks from an anthropological point of view in his examination of train stations, highways, and airports as non-places. He claims that places and non-places are binaries: places can never be erased and non-places can never be completed. Augé claims that these transitional locations are the result of supermodernity. Of equal importance is the relationship that we have within these locations. The traveler is emptied of identity but enjoys the passive indulgence of roll playing. Furthermore, there is an emphasis on the present, as all non-places deal with punctuality and the persistence of time. While non-places deal with specific individuals, they are only recognized as such upon exit and arrival through passports, identification cards, etc. While Augé seems ambivalent about non-place and the frequency with which we find ourselves drained of identity, it seems obvious that his ideas reveal a growing nihilism towards the importance of individual and particularized locations and how we interact with them. Furthermore, Augé’s ideas have been applied more recently to include any place that is dismissive of local identities while emptying one of personal identity. Marc Augé, *Non-Places: An Introduction to Supermodernity*. (London: Verso, 2009).

<sup>42</sup> Perlman, “Favela,” 316.

and contributes to the resignification of the favela resident as *gente*. Working in opposition of trends in urban planning that reify hard power, successful public projects aiming to create inclusive areas transform diverse spaces to reflect visions of a more efficacious national imaginary in an attempt to assert signs of citizenship and personhood into the urban landscape.

Historically, public art has been a way to test the limits of democracy and negotiate the fluctuating demands of citizenship.<sup>43</sup> However, perhaps in Rio de Janeiro these issues are most clearly debated through concrete walls as opposed to public sculpture. Inside the city, walls, gates, and locks separate public from private, formal from informal. Intercoms, attack dogs, locking gates and armed guards have long served as barriers between Rio's upper-middle-class condominiums and the dread and insecurity that permeate the crime-ridden city.<sup>44</sup> For example, as early as the 1970s gated communities became prevalent in the expensive neighborhood Barra da Tijuca (fig. 5); these exclusive spaces with single-family homes, high-end apartments, fitness clubs, and private pools helped create a controlled environment with limited unsavory social encounters.<sup>45</sup> These methods of defining public and private space have become signifiers of safety but also social belonging, as gates are a tangible manifestation of the severe

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<sup>43</sup> Miwon Kwon most clearly demonstrates public art as a means to test democracy in her discussion of Richard Serra's infamous *Tilted Arc*. The work was installed in a public space in New York during the 80s, but the large, minimalist sculpture attracted predominantly negative attention. People claimed that the sculpture made the public space unusable, and there was anxiety about what the 120 foot wall was capable of concealing, thus some considered it a threat to public safety. Public dissatisfaction with the monumental sculpture led to conversations about its removal, but Serra claimed that to remove the work would be to ruin it because it was contingent on a particular site. After long legal battles, *Tilted Arc* was removed. Many citizens claimed that Serra's work was an insertion of his private self onto public space, which mirrored the federal government's unwanted presence in the private lives of ordinary citizens. Regardless, *Tilted Arc* changed the way that public art was commissioned, and public works became a way to test the limits of democracy. Kwon, *One Place After Another*.

<sup>44</sup> Loïc Wacquant, "The Militarization of Urban Marginality: Lessons from the Brazilian Metropolis," *International Political Sociology* 2 (2008): 59.

<sup>45</sup> Vicente del Rio, "Urban Design and the Future of Public Space in the Brazilian City," *Focus* 1 (2004): 36.

socioeconomic gap.<sup>46</sup> Indeed, gated communities have long been examples of Rio de Janeiro's spatial control and exclusionary urban design that serves as a tool to segregate.

However, visible signs of separation became most obvious in 2009 when Rio's state government ordered that three meter cement walls be constructed around thirteen of the city's favelas, most of which are located in the city's wealthy *zona sul* (fig. 6). Advertised as eco-walls to curb the favelas from encroaching upon the surrounding Atlantic rainforest,<sup>47</sup> most critics consider the walls more in line with those in Berlin and Israel, tools of segregation, alienation, and containment. Furthermore, Sérgio Cabral Filho, Rio de Janeiro's governor responsible for building the walls, has been an outspoken critic of the city's favelas calling the neighborhoods, "A factory for producing criminals," and United Nations human rights officers even quizzed Brazilian officials over inferences of "geographic discrimination."<sup>48</sup> Therefore, perhaps citizenship and human rights are issues most clearly demonstrated through the overwhelming presence of cement walls and iron gates that separate wealthy *zona sul* neighborhoods like Ipanema and Barra da Tijuaca from the favelas that loom above.

Notably, the notion of the government-sponsored eco-wall does not apply to the barriers under construction in *zona norte* favelas. Instead, *zona norte* walls block views of the favelas from the Red Line highway that connects the city to the Rio de Janeiro International Airport (fig.

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<sup>46</sup> Ibid., 36.

<sup>47</sup> The seriousness of this issue should not be elided. The presence of the favelas wreaks havoc on Rio de Janeiro's environment through severe deforestation as favelas continue to grow exponentially faster than formally owned real estate. Furthermore, some favela residents have inadequate access to fresh water, sewage, and garbage disposal, which presents health hazards for both formal and informal populations and leads to the deterioration of urban rivers, lakes, and lagoons. These poor sanitary conditions are capable of poisoning soil and groundwater. L. F. F. Cerqueira, L. Pimentel da Silva & M. Marques, "Environmental Impacts by Low-Income Settlements in Rio de Janeiro," 4, accessed March 28, 2012, [http://www.google.com/url?sa=t&rct=j&q=&esrc=s&source=web&cd=1&ved=0CCMQFjAA&url=http%3A%2F%2Fwww.grhip.eng.uerj.br%2FArtigo\\_Low\\_Income.pdf&ei=VcFzT\\_PfFKXi2AX\\_7eWBDw&usg=AFQjCNG3wOiKyRMnURuSIaUM9Lr1gIIAWA&sig2=\\_CEnK4x4MuF5OFLaDTJe8Q](http://www.google.com/url?sa=t&rct=j&q=&esrc=s&source=web&cd=1&ved=0CCMQFjAA&url=http%3A%2F%2Fwww.grhip.eng.uerj.br%2FArtigo_Low_Income.pdf&ei=VcFzT_PfFKXi2AX_7eWBDw&usg=AFQjCNG3wOiKyRMnURuSIaUM9Lr1gIIAWA&sig2=_CEnK4x4MuF5OFLaDTJe8Q).

<sup>48</sup> Antonio Regelado, "Walls Around Rio's Slums Protect Trees But Don't Inspire Much Hugging," *The Wall Street Journal*, June 15, 2009, accessed February 13, 2012, <http://online.wsj.com/article/SB124501964322813585.html>.

7). Rio-based blogger, Christopher Gaffney has documented this issue in his writings that examine the massive changes occurring in Brazil as a result of the 2014 FIFA World Cup and 2016 Olympic games. Gaffney notes that while Rio's primary newspaper, *OGlobo*, claims that the walls between the roads and notorious favelas like the City of God are meant to regulate traffic noise, it is clear that the walls under construction are far too short to have any real impact on noise levels. Indeed, through a comparison of Rio's noise-cancelling walls with those built in the United States, it becomes clear that Rio's walls may serve an ulterior motive (fig. 8). Furthermore, the city's Colonel of Highway Patrol claims that the walls are meant to eliminate *bandidos* who sometimes perform mob assaults on gridlocked cars; however, the *bandidos* will still be able to navigate the roads easily through access ramps.<sup>49</sup> Ironically, *OGlobo* even reports that local artists will be temporarily employed to paint the walls that encage their communities as a type of social project. While the official role of the walls in *zona norte* remains unclear, they *do* seem to serve a number of other functions; they block the favelas from visitors traveling between the airport and the city center during the World Cup and Olympic games, and the walls will serve as a reminder to favela residents that their communities are better unseen and unheard. Regardless, it is evident that the construction of these walls will not contribute to any type of long-term problem solving.<sup>50</sup> A city dismembered by walls and gates, Rio de Janeiro's landscape is marked with tangible reminders of inequality and hard power.

While notions of alienation, criminalization, and dehumanization are becoming increasingly apparent through the construction of cement walls around favela communities, this

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<sup>49</sup> It is worth noting that the walls could have some positive effects. Most notably, they may protect drivers from stray bullets fired from inside the favelas. However, the walls also separate favela residents from the highways where many make a living selling food and drinks to drivers in traffic, and the walls only further separate communities that were already divided by the construction of the highway. Christopher Gaffney, "The Ironic and Tragic Walls of Rio de Janeiro," *Geostadia*, March 8, 2010, accessed February 13, 2012, <http://www.geostadia.com/2010/03/ironic-and-tragic-walls-of-rio-de.html>.

<sup>50</sup> Ibid.

is not the sole trend in the management of public space in Rio de Janeiro. While the walls in *zona sul* and *zona norte* operate through seclusion, other projects are contingent on the betterment of shared public spaces. Professor of city and regional planning Vicente del Rio claims that urban planning for social inclusion plays a significant role in the re-democratization of Brazil:

[...] the social function of the public realm [...] became crucial with the realization that the quality of public spaces and services were major issues not only for citizenship but also for ameliorating the gap between the rich and poor, and to compete for a better image nationally and abroad. In most major cities, city planning and urban projects try to recuperate the city-- or at least parts of it-- as a pluralist environment [...]

Therefore, public art and urban design projects can become ways of questioning and subverting the government regulated eco and noise walls that use aggressive strategies to subjugate vast populations, and successful projects can help reaffirm the right to belong to the landscape and future of the city.

## II. Françoise Schein's Public Participatory Works

In 2001, French artist Françoise Schein began the first in a series of public art projects in Rio de Janeiro aiming to examine human rights and their role in Brazilian democracy. Schein is the founder of Inscire, an NGO focused on integrating socially conscious collaborative projects into the urban landscape of Kabul, Lisbon, and Santiago de Chile amongst others.<sup>51</sup> A project working with the favela Vidigal in *zona sul*, *Caminho dos Direitos Humanos*, or *The Path To*

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<sup>51</sup> An architect, urban planner, and artist, Schein claims that human rights help define the physical form of cities. She began her "urban inscriptions" in Paris in 1989 using ceramic tiles and the United Nations' Universal Declaration of Human Rights as a way to leave a permanent reminder of human's fundamental privileges. Schein quickly developed a pedagogical approach to participatory art making that is now the foundation of Inscire's projects around the world. Most of her projects—for example, works in Brussels, Anderlecht, São Paulo, Santiago de Chile, Berlin, Lisbon, and Stockholm—are realized in subway stations, places of transit and transition. Schein claims that subway stations are the heart of the urban city, and her works enable people to read the texts while waiting for the trains. Françoise Schein, Founder of Inscire- Inscribing the Vision of Utopia Her Vision Her Words, accessed March 28, 2012, <http://www.inscire.com/>.

*Human Rights*, is the realization of a public plaza at the entrance of Vidigal made from sea foam and cobalt colored tiles (fig. 9). The plaza invests in locality through the inclusion of maps of the community,<sup>52</sup> and excerpts from philosophical texts by Aristotle are complemented with a poem by Vinícius de Moraes describing citizenship as a *carioca*, or citizen of Rio de Janeiro. Finally, passages from the United Nations' Universal Declaration of Human Rights bridge local and global issues of human rights.<sup>53</sup> The inclusion of these texts is meant to motivate conversation and exchange between favela residents and inspire a community-wide interest in human rights issues. Schein describes the urgency in creating a public space that recognizes the favela as a legitimate part of the city, "When I arrived in Rio in 1999, I realized that [...] there were no favelas' map on the city map. 2.5 million people live in Rio's favelas without being on the city map...."<sup>54</sup> After two years of conversations with locals and frequent meetings with Vidigal's resident's association, the *Caminho dos Direitos Humanos* was inaugurated as a public space marking the entrance of the favela with use-values ranging from meeting place to theatre stage.

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<sup>52</sup> It is significant that Schein places so much emphasis on maps given that maps have traditionally been used as a colonizing tool. While the city of Rio de Janeiro uses maps as a way to exclude and marginalize vast populations, Schein focuses on mapping the communities she works with as a way to reify their presence and authority within the city's landscape. In *The Practice of Everyday Life*, Michel de Certeau recognizes that maps colonize space by eliminating the narratives of the practices that produces it. Historically, the map brings together two very different ways to describe places; they collate information received through tradition and produced by observation. The map is the totalizing stage on which these two forms of knowledge are brought together to form the tableau of "state" that elides the operations that brought it into being. Therefore, Schein recognizes that the map is a proper place meant to exhibit the products of knowledge. To subvert the city map and instead focus on the places that it excludes is to create a story about a non-proper place, and this is an act of subversion that enables new ways of constructing subjectivities whose exclusion is predicated on difference. However, the concept of marginalization through mapping is not a new concept. In *The Idea of Latin America*, Walter Mignolo notes that the Americas were originally racialized through mapmaking that subscribed to Christian ideals. Located literally lower than Europe, Latin America was usually represented in conjunction with a nude woman.

<sup>53</sup> Paulo Knauss, "Scaling Down the Monumental: How Public Art Came to Inspire Community Action in Rio de Janeiro." *Review: Literature and Arts of the Americas*, 39:2 (2007): 186.

<sup>54</sup> "VIDIGAL: first favela project in Rio de Janeiro, Inscire, accessed February 3, 2012, <http://www.inscire.com/>.

Significantly, Schein's *Caminho dos Direitos Humanos*, a project that she describes as an "urban inscription," creates a functional open space within the favela, the importance of which is key in the generally cramped communities (fig 10). A compilation of narrow stairways, alleys, and self-built homes, favela neighborhoods are generally confined spaces too complicated to be mapped. An artist working in São Paulo, Mick O'Kelly describes spatial conditions and their affect on life in informal communities, "For favelas, public space is not a given. Instead public spaces have to be repeatedly reinvented through occupation and appropriation. Through appropriation, discourses emerge, [and spaces can begin to offer] new trajectories of use."<sup>55</sup> It is noteworthy that projects active in the production of new and useful spaces are especially pertinent in favelas where space is not only limited, but also charged with possibility.

Indeed, it is this sense of possibility that Schein's *Caminho dos Direitos Humanos* utilizes through its engagement with human rights advocacy combined with creative uses of space. Schein not only reshapes the hilly terrain into a leisure area, her project reconceptualizes space as something capable of serving a local population's needs as she transforms Vidigal's entrance into a place for contemplation, conversation, and celebration. Even seemingly banal choices, like the use of large steps to integrate the plaza into the uneven terrain and provide seating, help favela residents make use of their surroundings. Further, the cannibalization of space is never passive, but a transformational process of re-signification meant to create new meanings out of existing structures.<sup>56</sup> In other words, Schein's plaza re-envision the land between the *morro* and *asfalto* as territory ripe for reckoning with issues of citizenship and

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<sup>55</sup> Mick O'Kelly, "Urban Negotiations and Art Tactics." *Middle East Technical University Journal of the Faculty of Architecture* 28:1 (2011): 190, accessed November 4, 2011, DOI: 10.4305.

<sup>56</sup> Mosquera claims that Latin America peripheries have actually developed a "culture of resignification" through which the disempowered resignify the structures imposed by centers. Gerardo Mosquera, "Sphere, Cities, Transitions: International Perspectives on Art and Culture," in *Belonging and Globalisation: Critical Essays in Contemporary Art & Culture*, ed. Kamal Boullata, (London: SAQI, 2008), 89.

legitimacy. *Caminho dos Direitos Humanos* serves as a thoroughfare between formal and informal communities, but it is also a bridge between the self and other that allows for conversation about global human rights issues on a personal scale.

Schein's collaboration with Vidigal developed into an expansive series of over thirty participatory projects with Rio's favela communities. Simply called Favela Projects, these works engage local people in human rights issues through the craft of ceramics (fig. 11). The Favela Projects attract a wide age range of favela residents interested in learning the craft of ceramic painting, but there is also a strong emphasis on pedagogy as participants learn about the rights to which they are entitled.<sup>57</sup> In each project, participants respond to an article of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and how their lives relate to the excerpt. After conversation, the participants create images that represent their relationship to the concepts discussed, and finally, they paint the images onto ceramic tiles that will be part of the mural inaugurated in the neighborhood.<sup>58</sup> The final outcome is a community-created artwork that promotes the civil rights and social concerns of the local population through participation in inclusive events.

The Favela Projects are customized for each neighborhood in an attempt to engage local populations in diverse and meaningful ways. Primarily a sea foam, cobalt, and white color palette, the tile murals bring color to the neighborhoods and help enliven the built environment through attention to residents' needs and concerns. Therefore, every Favela Project represents a distinct local culture and point of view; the murals range in subject matter from concerns over slavery, the treatment of indigenous populations, and environmental degradation. Furthermore,

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<sup>57</sup> "Artistic, Social and Sustainable Human Rights Urban Projects," Inscire, accessed February 3, 2012, <http://www.inscire.com/>.

<sup>58</sup> Sara Roffino, "Underground Artist: Francoise Schein Transforms Subway Stations With Thought-Provoking Art," *Afar* (2011): 100.



the murals are installed in public and private spaces, some actually covering the exterior of the participants' homes. This particularly interesting combination of self-built homes and human rights declarations creates a loaded message given that these structures have historically been used as tools to deny their inhabitants of their human rights. Tiles inscribed with drawings, text, and maps become a catalyst for social engagement by linking public and private spaces with politically charged messages.

The Favela Projects proved so successful inside informal communities that project collaborator and *carioca* architect Laura Taves created a ceramics workshop in 2003. The Tile Workshop – Atelier Azulejaria consists of women originally involved in the Favela Projects who expressed an interest in inaugurating an organization for sustained learning and creating (fig. 12).<sup>59</sup> Initially conceived as a space to further the participants' knowledge in ceramics, The Tile Workshop now provides the women with financial independence through the sales of the objects they manufacture.<sup>60</sup> The organization operates under the claim, "To know the city is to leave one's neighborhood, to go to museums, to learn the iconography of the society, to learn an ability, to develop a skill, to become a professional, to earn an income, and to make all of it a field of social intervention."<sup>61</sup> Therefore, the workshop provides professional and entrepreneurial training, but there is still a strong emphasis on creative collaborations and the transmission of knowledge as a consciousness raising initiative. Acquiring skills, gaining knowledge, creating products, and participating in the consumer market helps The Tile Workshop's participants reckon with their peripheral status in the context of the urban environment.

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<sup>59</sup> "The Tile Workshop," accessed February 15, 2012, <http://thetileworkshop.blogspot.com/>.

<sup>60</sup> "Promoting Social Change Through the Arts," Inscire, accessed February 15, 2012, <http://www.inscire.com/>.

<sup>61</sup> Francoise Schein, "Ceramic: A Tool for the Diffusion of Human Rights and Social Change," *Art and Architecture Journal* 68/69 (2009): 42.

Schein's work in Rio de Janeiro culminates with a large-scale mural installed in 2003 outside the Siqueira Campos metro station in the expensive and trendy neighborhood of Copacabana (fig. 13). Titled *O Caminho dos Direitos Humanos*, or *The Path to Human Rights*, the work shares its name with the plaza in Vidigal that deals with similar issues. Schein enlisted *carioca* architect Laura Taves, French artist Talya Kahn, and local populations to participate in the conception and execution of the tile mosaic. Interestingly, the mural is located between several favela communities in the *morro* and the Copacabana Palace, the most luxurious and prestigious hotel in Rio de Janeiro. Using the same sea foam and cobalt color palette, the tile mosaic depicts the outline of Copacabana Beach's coastline. At eye level, the entire 1948 Universal Declaration of Human Rights is inscribed by hand. Three Afro-Brazilian figures represent the concept of the mural: a twelve foot high man represents labor, an old woman alludes to Brazil's guilt as the last country in the Americas to abolish slavery, and a young girl signifies the country's hope for the future.<sup>62</sup> Another large section of the wall is covered with a poem by Arnaldo Antunes, a poet living in São Paulo. Finally, small images painted by favela residents depict scenes of slavery and strenuous manual labor.<sup>63</sup> Schein's series of collaborations yielded projects involving diverse communities throughout the city as painting tiles becomes a creative outlet that fosters social organization and new relationships while revealing latent talents and interests.

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<sup>62</sup> Ibid., 43.

<sup>63</sup> "Making an Urban Symbolic Monument with an Educational Action," Inscire, accessed February 15, 2012, <http://www.inscire.com/>.

### III. Human Rights as a Precursor for Democracy

In Rio de Janeiro, Françoise Schein's creative focus has largely centered on the creation of meeting places and distinctive spaces that motivate contemplation.<sup>64</sup> The projects engage Brazil's history, and most often the country's history of slavery, in an attempt to rethink the contemporary cultural climate based on Othering. The conscious inclusion of imagery and themes that hearken back to slavery's oppression seems to create a dialogue with the current treatment of favelas, the origins of which are deeply rooted in the effects of slavery.

Interestingly, while many of Schein's projects feature the use of walls, her mosaic tiles are a stark contrast to the government-regulated walls that now encircle dozens of favelas. Indeed, Schein's projects that assert citizenship and the right to the city utilize a strikingly similar medium as the so-called eco and noise walls that strip public spaces of any sign of locality or social belonging. Each urban design initiative sees the favelas as sites where construction and spatial modification will contribute to social change within the city; however, it is clear that the walls' methods, messages, and intended outcomes are in opposition.

The state government of Rio de Janeiro's plan to enclose the city's favelas is a dehumanizing solution to the significantly more complex environmental, economic, social, and infrastructural issues that plague the city. However, what the government's walls block off, Schein's walls cut through. While eco and noise walls only propagate the stigma of living in a favela, Schein uses participatory art to create monuments that not only negotiate the rolls of

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<sup>64</sup> Paulo Knauss notes that this is an interesting juxtaposition to her other works in Europe. Many of Schein's European works are realized in subway stations, places of intense circulation where reading the text on the tiles contrasts with the encroaching train. Knauss claims that Schein shifts from spaces of circulation to places of concentration, or meeting points, "Instead of waiting time, time for action in the city, inspired by the history of the society, its icons consecrated in painting and letters. Instead of interacting with the walls, one can discover "the other" in the same city, an "other" represented by the communities of the favelas." Knauss, "Scaling Down the Monumental," 186.

citizenship and human rights, they reckon with history in a way that questions why and how it came into being. Government mandated walls are silencing tools and signs of militaristic power, but Schein's walls are meeting points for the facilitation of a new discourse, a discourse that benefits everyone through the inclusion of diverse voices into the national historical narrative. Therefore, these two types of urban planning replicate the long history of antagonism between the favelas and the state government by questioning whose version of citizenship is worth discussing.

It is important to note that while Schein's public works are aiming to reconsider human rights and who holds the power to own the city, her works do not project false senses of cohesion or collective identity. Indeed, works based on ideas of community or identity should not dwell on essentialist claims or gloss over internal differences in an attempt to convey myths of harmony,<sup>65</sup> and projects dealing with favela populations and human rights should not elide internal dissimilarities in an attempt to propagate naïve notions of community togetherness.<sup>66</sup> Furthermore, friction between *asfalto* and *morro* should be recognized, and the concept of complete integration should perhaps be forfeited, giving way to ideas of coexistence and mutual

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<sup>65</sup> Tim Hall and Iain Robertson, "Public Art and Urban Regeneration: Advocacy, Claims and Critical Debates," *Landscape Research* 26 (2001): 19.

<sup>66</sup> Nina Möntmann delves further into the concept of essentialist versus anti-essentialist notions of community in her book, *New Communities*. Möntmann questions what it means to belong in a globalized, post-national world and how artists experiment with new art forms in order to engage communities. She questions: is community based on location of common interests? Furthermore, she claims that globalization has created a rift between the nation and the state. The state is the territorial component and the nation is the historical ideological construct. She claims that one defines themselves through their chosen or imposed interaction with communities; this creates a relational concept of the self. While communities are traditionally focused around essentializing ideas of race and gender or homogenizing ideas of shared history, Möntmann claims that new communities revolve around coexisting of singularities and shared experience. New communities are anti-essentialist, and there are no preconditions to belong except to be in the world. She outlines two new types of communities that are predicated on the acceptance of difference and Otherness: experimental and imagined communities. Experimental communities focus on a diverse population that is brought into conversation; they do not focus on marginal groups defined by specific features. Imagined communities, a concept coined by Benedict Anderson, are individualized senses on community that exist in the mind of the artist and do not necessarily involve other people. Imagined communities exist on an abstract level, but they hope to encourage real actions or changes. Nina Möntmann, "New Communities."

respect. Art historian Rosalyn Deutsche claims that public works focusing on the enhancement of community cohesion “presume that the task of democracy is to settle, rather than sustain, conflict.”<sup>67</sup> Similarly, Schein’s public works dealing with the roles of democracy and citizenship in human rights are not striving to resolve the contentious relationship between formal and informal communities, informal community and state government, but to precipitate consciousness, conversation, and critical thinking from each constituent. Her collaborative works operate on a much humbler scale than resolution; they simply aim to reaffirm favela residents’ humanity. The recognition of favela residents as *gente*, humans worthy of recognition and respect, is a precondition to a democratic public sphere in which constitutional rights are upheld. Eliding facile notions of coherence, public art should instead focus on the creation of new inclusive communities in which the only precondition to belong is to exist in the world.<sup>68</sup>

Returning to the original question posed by Laymert Garcia dos Santos, “Who has the right to belong to the future of humanity, and who is condemned to disappear?”<sup>69</sup> It is clear that public art and urban planning are only two ways of negotiating the right to belong. Essentially, successful collaborative public works that deal with identity, citizenship, and personhood in a globalized world should seek a new, more efficacious national imaginary that considers the affective possibilities emanating from contention, marginalization, and unrest.<sup>70</sup> These results of social stratification are used productively in works like Schein’s that challenge the tradition of

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<sup>67</sup> Rosalyn Deutsche, Rosalyn Deutsche, *Evictions: Art and Spatial Politics*, (Cambridge, Massachusetts: MIT Press, 1996), 270.

<sup>68</sup> Möntmann, 12

<sup>69</sup> Santos, “Belonging and not Belonging.”

<sup>70</sup> Americanist Erika Doss discusses the idea of reimagining the national history through the effective possibilities coming from anger and grief in reference to public memorials and monuments. She attaches these concepts to a trend that she calls Memorial Mania, an obsession with memory and history paired with a demand for representation and respect. Doss claims that memorials are archives of feeling meant to encapsulate affect and nuance, but they are also fueled by anger and the positive possibilities that anger may yield. Erika Doss, “Cultural Vandalism and Public Memory: Ager, Citizenship, and Memorials in Contemporary America.” (paper presented at the University of Colorado at Boulder’s Visiting Scholars Lecture, Boulder, Colorado, January 31, 2012).

who and what should be seen and remembered through the insertion of reminders of the favelas into shared public spaces in an attempt to reaffirm favela residents' right to the city. Therefore, the negative backlash from dehumanizing effects of hard power can be transformed into positive motivations to reclaim the right to belong. Through the inclusion of responsible public art, the urban landscape is altered in meaningful ways to reflect a plural understanding of citizenship, democracy, and belonging.

## 2. Seeing and Being Seen: Transforming the Urban Imaginary Through a Politics of Difference

### I. Visibility as Intelligibility

“I am an invisible man. No I am not a spook like those who haunted Edgar Allen Poe: nor am I one of your Hollywood movie ectoplasms. I am a man of substance, of flesh and bone, fiber and liquids - and I might even be said to possess a mind. I am invisible, simply because people refuse to see me.”<sup>71</sup> In the 1952 novel *Invisible Man*, Ralph Ellison’s nameless African American protagonist conveys the dehumanization characterized by social exclusion. The narrator uses his first person narrative to make himself visible and reckon with his place in a volatile cultural climate marked by violence and inequality. However, while the protagonist tries to make meaning of his surroundings, it is clear that the small act of telling his story of invisibility is a politically motivated statement for change. Invisibility and the political implications that accompany acts of seeing are universal concepts that transcend spatio-temporal notions of identity.

Processes of seeing and being seen are particularly relevant and pressing issues in favela communities that exist on the literal and metaphorical margins of the Brazilian urban and political landscape. Being seen (passive) is a prerequisite for official acceptance, and therefore, making oneself seen (active) is a strategic effort from the inside out that aims to re-imagine the urban terrain through a politics of difference that embraces heterogeneity.<sup>72</sup> Instead of a city

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<sup>71</sup> Ralph Ellison, *Invisible Man* (New York: Vintage International, 1995), 3.

<sup>72</sup> Young claims that the dream, community is an idealized place in which people are transparent and engage in face-to-face interactions that allow social closeness and comfort. However, she claims that this notion of community is unrealistic in a post-national, post-industrial world. Furthermore, the dream community privileges homogeneity over heterogeneity and resists different points of view. Instead of taking comfort in sameness, Young rallies for a community based on a politics of difference in which people embrace difference and otherness; however, her discussion seems to stop short of offering real possibilities of how to create a community that embraces a politics of difference. Iris Marion Young, "The Ideal of Community and the Politics of Difference," *Social Theory and Practice* 12 (Spring 1986).

focused on social closeness and transparency, through the acceptance of otherness, Rio de Janeiro is capable of transforming into an urban imaginary based on plurality. By examining projects that manipulate issues of visibility, territoriality, and the built environment, I will consider ways in which social actors envision and re-vision the favela and its sociopolitical identification within Rio de Janeiro.<sup>73</sup> I contend that projects focusing solely on aesthetics and the external image of the favela deal only superficially, only literally, with issues of becoming visible and the possibilities for change that visibility entails. Conversely, successful initiatives like the Morrinho Project and AfroReggae are focused on re-signifying auto-construction and its discontents within the context of larger representational systems. These projects concentrate on the contentious nature of space and territory and how informal built environments can obtain permanent visibility in order to operate in and through the formal city.

Of key interest is whether the issue of visibility translates into intelligibility. Because informal communities have been historically ignored by the political and economic forces that contributed to their construction, the resignification of the favela as a legitimate place, a place worthy of recognition, is meaningful. However, the formal city's acknowledgement of favelas does not necessarily contribute to a paradigm shift in how the former considers these communities. Therefore, it is important to consider whether visibility transcends representational strategies to recreate the favela as a comprehensible, coherent place, a place in which the lives, histories, and experiences of its inhabitants are recognized as legitimate. The projects examined below began as simple ways for favela citizens to cope with lives marked by police violence, drug wars, and the realities of exclusion, but the products they yield render the favela visible in interesting and fresh ways. Social practices enabling visibility by reckoning

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<sup>73</sup> I use the term re-vision to convey ideas of revising and envisioning again. To re-vision the city is to simultaneously change or edit the landscape and project a new, more productive urban imaginary.



with the implications of auto-construction can, if successfully negotiated, transform the favela into an intelligible place capable of simultaneously producing culture and questioning the hegemonic narratives assigned to it by a history of social and economic imbalance. Through the production of images and narratives created from within favelas, these spaces marked by antagonism, contempt, and abjection can become places that self-define, and favela residents can reimagine a city and world where people's lives are not valued or dismissed based solely on the location of their homes.

## II. Favela Chic Beautification: Haas&Hahn's *O Morro*

Participatory arts and cultural projects working through the favelas are increasingly prevalent in Rio de Janeiro, but one of the most ambitious initiatives is Haas&Hahn's *O Morro* (fig. 14). In 2010, Jeroen Koolhaas and Dre Urhahn, Dutch artists operating under the pseudonym Haas&Hahn, began working with local communities in Favela Santa Marta located in *zona sul*.<sup>74</sup> Their project titled *O Morro*, or *The Hill*, enlisted the participation of local youths in an attempt to fulfill the artists' dream to paint an entire favela hillside; however, the pair's motivated yet overdetermined enthusiasm elucidates the project's shortcomings.<sup>75</sup> Located in the center of Rio de Janeiro, Santa Marta proved the perfect location for their project aiming to render the *morro* visible from downtown through a shock of color. Because favelas are self-built homes commonly constructed from brick, concrete, and corrugated metal, the incorporation of a

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<sup>74</sup> *O Morro* was realized after a project in Vila Cruzeiro, a *zona norte* favela. In 2006, Haas&Hahn worked with residents in Vila Cruzeiro to paint two large murals: a one hundred and fifty meter mural depicting a boy flying a kite and a massive coy fish mural situated on a concrete structure protecting the community from landslides. Again, young people simultaneously learned to paint and earned money for their work. While this project still deals with the aestheticization of the favela as if it were a site for consumption, I believe it to be more successful for a number of reasons. The subject matter of the mural, a boy flying a kite, depicts a popular pastime in the favelas; kite-flying lends itself to the cramped conditions in the communities, and therefore, kites are frequently hovering above the favelas. As a result, the subject matter actually relates to the communities. Also, Haas&Hahn's choice to work with a *zona norte* favela, which are generally of less interest to NGOs, upgrading programs, and academics than their *zona sul* counterparts, seems to speak more to their interest in the community as such rather than their own very visible and somewhat self-righteous display in *O Morro*.

<sup>75</sup> "Santa Marta," Favela Painting, accessed January 26, 2012, <http://www.favelapainting.com/santa-marta>.

large-scale rainbow pastel mural is a stark contrast from the neighborhood's original façade of earth tones and exposed brick. Local residents were tutored on painting techniques and materials as well as safety measures for working with scaffolding. In addition to this training, participants received a paycheck for their working on the project.<sup>76</sup> The final result, corresponding with a pre-conceived linear pattern, was a sprawling technicolor mural covering seven thousand square meters and thirty-four houses.

Hans&Hahn were initially exposed to Brazil's informal communities through a documentary that MTV commissioned the pair to make exploring the role of hip hop in São Paulo and Rio de Janeiro's favelas. Motivated by their visit, Koolhaas, an audio-visual designer, and Urhahn, a journalist and entrepreneur, decided to return to the favelas with the goal of creating outrageous and unexpected works of art. Haas&Hahn claim that their motive behind their choice of the favela as subject is to crystallize the social tensions between the *morro* and *asfalto* while fostering a sense of "pride and joy at the bottom of the social hierarchy."<sup>77</sup> Indeed, the duo claims that through the transformation of Santa Marta, the favela will become a permanent work of art, a tourist site, and a treasured landmark in line with Christ the Redeemer and Sugar Loaf. Furthermore, the mural was funded through the Firmeza Foundation, a Dutch organization that supports the inculcation of striking artworks into unexpected landscapes. However, the funding method is structured to complement the community-based nature of the project; instead of lump sum, single patron funding, the project receives money from a community of supporters. The invitation for participation is extended to donors willing to

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<sup>76</sup> In reference to compensation for participation, artist Santiago Sierra commonly pays participants to engage in projects that call attention to their marginalization or exploitation. For example, his work *60 cm Line Tattooed on Four People* consists of four drug-addicted prostitutes who allowed the artist to tattoo a line across their backs in exchange for enough money to purchase a shot of heroine. While Sierra's works explicitly highlight attitudes towards marginal populations, it is unclear if Hans&Hahn's motives are as politically charged.

<sup>77</sup> "O Morro," Favela Painting, accessed January 26, 2012, <http://www.favelapainting.com/omorro>.

contribute funds to the project, and €1000 earns investors co-founder status, permanently attaching the patron's name to the work.<sup>78</sup> This non-traditional method of funding seems to have proven ineffective, as the project has been abandoned. At least temporarily, Hans&Hahn have left Rio, and their dream of painting the entire hillside has been postponed. The pair hopes to return, but they have no concrete plans.<sup>79</sup>

While *O Morro*, a project aiming to provide visibility to an entire hillside favela, succeeds in engaging the community through paid participation and altering the built environment with a painted pattern, the work fails to identify real underlying tensions operating within the favela. Adriana Navarro-Sertich, currently researching the recent trend in scholarly interest in the favela, a concept that she terms "Favela Chic," identifies a number of problems with "slum upgrading" projects that fail to address the social, cultural, and political alienation and displacement inherent in favela communities.<sup>80</sup> Navarro-Sertich claims that many Favela Chic projects focused on aesthetics suffer from confused priorities; these interventions overlook recurring problems in favor of short-term representational strategies that prove difficult to maintain. Further, Favela Chic projects often remain disconnected from the internal needs and hierarchies in the favela. Detached from local rationale, these works only use the favela as a space to stage an intervention. Finally, many Favela Chic projects overlook the impact of the

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<sup>78</sup> Ibid.

<sup>79</sup> Recently, Haas&Hahn proposed a technicolor paint job to improve New York City's public housing. On an online article detailing the proposal, commenter Randomtransplant remarked, "There are a million things Bloomberg could learn from Lula's presidency. This is probably the most trivial." Indeed, Haas&Hahn seem to conceive of paint as a one-size-fits-all bandage as neither project invests in the unique factors that contribute to the construction of low-income housing. In each location, topical changes presumably lead to social transformation. Jamie Feldmar, "Crazy Neon Housing Projects in Our Future?" *The Gothamist*, May 11, 2011, accessed March 16, 2012, [http://gothamist.com/2011/05/11/are\\_housing\\_projects\\_getting\\_a\\_neon.php](http://gothamist.com/2011/05/11/are_housing_projects_getting_a_neon.php).

<sup>80</sup> Navarro-Sertich further discusses Favela Chic in her transdisciplinary blog, Favelissues. Noting that a significant amount of contemporary urbanization is happening informally, Navarro-Sertich coins the term Favela Chic as a way to understand this new paradigm. Once ignored by the government and formal community, Favela Chic programs often attempt to alleviate displacement and marginalization by recognizing informal communities as integral to the discourse of the growing city. Navarro-Sertich's research is geared towards the analysis of both successful and unsuccessful Favela Chic projects. For more information visit <http://favelissues.com/>.

formal market on the “upgraded” favela. Interventions disregarding property values frequently lead to gentrification and formalization that only further limit low-income housing options.<sup>81</sup> Navarro-Sertich’s analysis of misguided Favela Chic projects thoroughly applies to *O Morro*. Haas&Hahn place significant attention on the external beautification of Santa Marta as opposed to confronting structural and infrastructural issues inherent in the community given its unplanned nature. Further, *O Morro* was conceptualized as a project aiming solely to paint a “hillside slum,” and locals were trained to paint, but not consulted during the planning process when the form of the design was conceived. Working under the umbrella of community-based art, *O Morro* seems more in tune with the artists’ predetermined vision rather than the wellbeing of the Santa Marta Favela. Finally, partially completed in 2010, the economic effects of *O Morro* remain to be seen, but as the upgraded neighborhood becomes more attractive to outsiders looking to buy or rent properties, it is highly likely that real estate prices will only increase.

Given the limitations and shortcomings evident in *O Morro*, reception regarding the project is mixed. Blogs chronicling the transformation of Santa Marta Favela receive ample positive responses, but just as frequently, local and international readers criticize or condemn the project. Brasileiro/ Brazillian writes:

...still expecting the day when these community projects approach a change in the way people live and participate in the dynamics of construction and intervention in space and its habitability.  
Even if this project stands for a way [for] this community [to] communicate about its reality and take its first step into a change, still a showcase for people from outside this community. [...]<sup>82</sup>

Indeed, many comments convey feelings of skepticism concerning Haas&Hahn’s outsider status in the community, and readers consistently claim that their efforts seem to stem from ulterior

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<sup>81</sup> “Favela Chic,” Smithsonian Cooper-Hewitt, National Design Museum, accessed January 27, 2012, <http://www.cooperhewitt.org/blog/2012/01/06/favela-chic>.

<sup>82</sup> Brasileiro / Brazilian, June 1, 2010 (12:15) commented on Sebastian J, “Favela Painting,” *Architecture Daily*, June 1, 2010, <http://www.archdaily.com/62689/favela-painting/>.

motives given that the favela residents were not part of the decision making process in terms of design.<sup>83</sup> Art historian Miwon Kwon claims that the most successful public art projects are conceived in conjunction with ongoing communities where the artist is consistently present and interactive,<sup>84</sup> criterion that remains unfulfilled through Haas&Hahn's disconnected, even absent approach to community-driven artwork.<sup>85</sup> While no project involving diverse communities is without problems, Haas&Hahn's *O Morro* seems to encapsulate the Favela Chic project that utilizes a marginal community as a means to achieve a self-important artistic vision as opposed to interventions focused on social transformation through tangible results.<sup>86</sup>

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<sup>83</sup> See "Favela Painting Project: Can a Little Paint Change Entrenched Poverty?" for an extensive conversation about the sustainability and social implications regarding the project that takes place in the comments sections in this skeptical blog. Julie Schwieter, "Favela Painting Project: Can a Little Paint Change Entrenched Poverty?" *Matador Change*, June 19, 2010, accessed January 27, 2012, <http://matadornetwork.com/change/favela-painting-project-can-a-little-paint-change-entrenched-poverty/>.

<sup>84</sup> Miwon Kwon's *One Place After Another* examines one particularly interesting exhibition in Chicago, *Culture In Action*, which dealt exclusively with new genre public art projects that experimented with multiple ways to construct communities based on participation. The 1993 exhibition resulted in eight projects, amongst them a block party organized by neighborhood teens, monumental rocks with plaques commemorating 100 women throughout the city, and a multiethnic neighborhood parade. The exhibition aimed to demystify the creative process by allowing the people to negotiate the relationship between art and public space. Interests were shifted from the artist to the audience, and there was a focus on unmediated engagement of the artist and audience groups through shared authorship. Furthermore, many works celebrated everyday experiences. There was an effort to engage real people in non-art issues outside of the museum to provoke conversation. People became empowered not just as participations, but often as creators, themselves. The most successful of the *Culture in Action* projects were the ones that brought together invented communities through sustained artist participation. Therefore, people were brought together based on their interest to contribute; the project did not revolve around an existing communal identity. An example of this, the group Haha created *Flood*, a hydroponic garden to grow food for HIV/ AIDS patients. The project flourished into a place for education and even became a site for networking with other healthcare organizations. Perhaps most importantly, the project outlasted the exhibition and still exists today, albeit in a slightly altered state. While *Flood* is one of the more successful new genre public art projects that Kwon details, there is still a great deal of criticism surrounding the topic. First, many of the new forms of participatory community building art exist outside of the museum, and therefore they only engage a select number of people; they are exclusive because the people attracted to the project have more access than average museum-goers. Other critics claim that these projects engage people in meaningless interactions that yield frivolous results. Furthermore, the participants are not paid for their time, which reifies class-based distinctions and exploits people. However, most often, these works are condemned as social work or even charity, and some projects even have overly sentimental or pseudo-religious overtones. Projects that focus on the care and education of a marginal population often become over-didactic. Also, it has been noted that government funding has begun to favor these socially based projects in lieu of more traditional art forms. Kwon, *One Place After Another*, 100-112.

<sup>85</sup> *Ibid.*, 112.

<sup>86</sup> Street artist JR's *Women are Heroes* installed in Morro da Providência is another example of community-based work that focuses on the external qualities of the favela and places an emphasis on being seen. However, JR's approach and methodology are quite different rendering his project less relevant to the discussion above. In 2008, JR began pasting large-scale images of women's faces in cities around the world: Sudan, Sierra Leone, Kenya and

### III. The Favela as Replica and Parody: The Morrinho Project

While Haas&Hahn's *O Morro* serves as an example of community-oriented activism initiated from outside the favela, a number of projects established by favela residents have proven more successful through the local and even international visibility they provide to informal communities. The Morrinho Project, created in the *zona sul* favela Pereira da Silva in 1997, is a replica of a favela manufactured by a team of local boys (fig. 15). Located in the hills of the favela, Morrinho is a small model community constructed out of found materials that now spans over three hundred and fifty meters through Pereira da Silva's landscape. Morrinho was not originally conceived as an art object but as a game based on role-playing and the recreation of social and cultural experiences inside the favela. The project began with a few neighborhood boys interested in using found materials to replicate the other favela communities visible from their own hillside location. As Morrinho became an increasingly popular pastime attracting dozens of local boys, the model community expanded. Bricks came to represent hillside houses, and Lego characters stood in for real favela citizens (fig. 16). Drug traffickers, formal and informal economy employees, baile funk disc jockeys,<sup>87</sup> and local politicians are depicted through characters that act out domestic disputes, suicides, romantic relationships, wars with rival drug gangs, and conflicts with Rio's military police. Thiago, a founding member of the project, recalls the use of extreme police brutality against young favela residents as a major motivation in the creation of Morrinho:

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Liberia, India, Cambodia, Laos, and Morocco. In Rio, JR focused his efforts on the Morro da Providência favela. He recorded the stories of women affected by police and drug-related violence before photographing their faces and pasting the massive prints on walls throughout the favela. Visible from the formal city, the project garnered significant attention from the press and helped secure JR's 2011 TED Prize, a yearly award of \$100,000 given to an artist hoping to change the world. The award allowed the street artist to initiate the Inside Out program discussed below.

<sup>87</sup> Baile funk is a type of dance music specific to Rio de Janeiro. Funk is particularly popular amongst lower class citizens, and favelas are known for funk parties where this type of music is played. Funk lyrics typically deal with issues of race, gender, poverty, and violence.

I wanted to understand why. Why was it that they were killing the kids of the community? Why was it even that they were coming into the community? Why were they killing and shooting? Why did they oppress people inside of their own homes? Why would they provoke us, talking, calling us names?<sup>88</sup>

Therefore, The Morrinho Project became a way for local children to understand, question, and even escape the world around them. The boys implemented strict rules and laws in Morrinho to ensure that the game mirrored the reality of the everyday exchanges observed in Pereira da Silva. People died permanently, there were no idealistic events or characters, and any children playing outside of the self-imposed rules were expelled from participating in Morrinho.<sup>89</sup>

In 2001, filmmakers Fábio Gavião and Markão Oliveira visited Morrinho and saw the opportunity to create a documentary about the game. However, they suggested that the young people involved create the film themselves, tell their story in first-person. Gavião and Markão trained the young people in audiovisual techniques, camera work, and editing to help the boys record their stories chronicling the development of The Morrinho Project. In 2008 after seven years of documenting the model community, *Morrinho: Deus sabe tudo mas não é X-9*, or *Morrinho: God Knows Everything but Is Not a Snitch* was released in museums and film festivals in Brazil, Europe, and the United States bringing attention to Brazil's favela communities and The Morrinho Project's mission to communicate through creativity while creating another reality.<sup>90</sup>

Over a decade after the game's conception, Morrinho continues to thrive in Pereira da Silva; however, now the miniature faux community is a registered non-governmental

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<sup>88</sup> Bryn Hafemeister, "An Analysis of a Small Favela-Based Youth Organization," in *Proceedings of The Tenth Annual College of Education and Graduate Student Network Research Conference*, ed. Maria S. Plakhotnik et al. (Miami: College of Education, Florida International University, 2011): 51.

<sup>89</sup> Ibid., 52.

<sup>90</sup> "História," Projecto Morrinho, accessed February 9, 2012, [http://www.morrinho.com/Morrinho/Projeto\\_Morrinho\\_Historia.html](http://www.morrinho.com/Morrinho/Projeto_Morrinho_Historia.html).



organization.<sup>91</sup> In exchange for participation in Morrinho's cultural interactions, young people in the community tend to the upkeep of the model. Therefore, simultaneously working and playing, these young people are provided with the discipline and structure that many fail to receive from school or community programming.<sup>92</sup> Further, The Morrinho Project is a sustained presence within the community with the objective of offering young people an alternative to organized crime. The project has expanded to encompass TV Morrinho, an organization teaching young people audiovisual production skills, and Morrinho Social, a segment of the project promoting art education, social consciousness, and economic development.<sup>93</sup> These branches work in tandem giving The Morrinho Project national and international visibility at exhibitions ranging from the International Exhibition of Architecture in Rio de Janeiro to the World Forum of Cultures in Barcelona to the 52nd Venice Biennale.<sup>94</sup> Furthermore, while The Morrinho Project is garnering global attention, the project is aiming to transform Pereira da Silva into a community that is fully sustained through the tourism Morrinho attracts; the project becomes a bridge between *morro* and *asfalto*. What began as a child's game has become a community-wide motivation to actively engage the center in a dialogue with the periphery.<sup>95</sup>

Significantly, The Morrinho Project mirrors the aesthetics of the favela in an attempt to

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<sup>91</sup> The Morrinho Project functions primarily through donations and admissions fees. However, in 2008 the project received a grant from the Ministry of Culture of Brazil.

<sup>92</sup> Hafemeister, "An Analysis of a Small Favela-Based Youth Organization," 53.

<sup>93</sup> "Exposição Morrinho" Projecto Morrinho, accessed January 28, [http://www.morrinho.com/Morrinho/Projeto\\_Morrinho\\_Exposicao\\_Morrinho.html](http://www.morrinho.com/Morrinho/Projeto_Morrinho_Exposicao_Morrinho.html).

<sup>94</sup> In 2010, seven members from The Morrinho Project collaborated with fourteen young people from London's culturally diverse but crime-ridden Stockwell Park Estate in Brixton to recreate Morrinho on London's prestigious South Bank. Part of a larger festival highlighting Brazilian culture, The Morrinho Project on South Bank added small graffiti tags to the brick houses, Brixton's postal code, SW9, was written on a tower, and at the top of the hill was a replica of the Brixton Prison. The project brought both Pereira da Silva and Brixton residents to the South Bank to engage in a dialogue about what it means to live in spaces of poverty and violence. Gareth A. Jones, "Slumming About," *City: Analysis of Urban Trends, Culture, Theory, Policy, Action* 15:6 (2011): 705.

<sup>95</sup> While it is noteworthy that in light of recent developments in network studies, the metaphor of center and periphery could be considered antiquated, I believe that this model is still adequate in describing the relationship between formal and informal communities in Brazil.



resignify the informal community as an intelligible place. The collaboration functions as both a replica and parody of the daily lives that have been historically dismissed. Indeed, urban geographer Gareth A. Jones posits that The Morrinho Project operates as a series of antagonisms:

[Morrinho] works as a politics of aesthetics, it challenges the visibility and intelligibility of what the organisers and ‘visitors’ think of as a favela. Morrinho operates at the point of tension between what is play and performance, what is real (or realist) and fantasy, and ultimately what is favela (Pereira) and what we think favela is (Morrinho).<sup>96</sup>

Morrinho challenges the traditional construction of hegemonic knowledge that equates the favela with criminal activity and instead suggests that the peripheries can create and participate in the production of culture.<sup>97</sup> This children’s game come installation artwork becomes a palimpsest of materials and ideas, reused but resembling their original form, an auto-constructed environment assembled from the detritus of the auto-constructed environment that concentrates on the politics of self-representation. The Morrinho Project serves as a collaborative work that challenges notions of how productive places are imagined from the inside out.

#### **IV. Selling the Favela: AfroReggae**

While The Morrinho Project involves both manufactured model environments and social exchanges to reform the politics of the favela into something comprehensible for people from both the *morro* and *asfalto*, The Grupo Cultural AfroReggae is based on intangible practices but still with the aim of resignifying the favela as a legitimate place. Another example of a community-based grassroots initiative from inside the favela, AfroReggae was initiated in 1993 in the *zona norte* favela Vigário Geral (fig. 17). Founder José Júnior devised AfroReggae as a musical group blending hip-hop, funk, reggae, and dance with socially conscious lyrics. Additionally, the group was established as a direct result of a series of violent encounters

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<sup>96</sup> Jones, “Slumming About,” 704.

<sup>97</sup> Ibid., 705.

between favela residents and Rio's military police. On July 23, 1993, off-duty police murdered eight street children in front of the downtown Candelária Church in a "social cleansing" effort. At the end of August, police murdered twenty-one innocent Vigário Geral residents; the previous day, the favela's primary narcotrafficking gang, Red Command, killed four police officers attempting to extort a drug shipment. AfroReggae is a creative movement aiming to understand the types of violence committed against the favela, to demand social justice, and to fight for the equal citizenship of favela residents. An excerpt from the AfroReggae song "Capa De Revista" crystallizes the group's optimism despite brutality and exclusion:

A gunshot and people scatter/ Both cartels got beef with each other/ But I have a hammer in one hand, pencil in the other/ I'm another one who's made the great escape/ Rio's explosion has arrived to stay/ The new face of the people's culture/ And it's all going to change/ We're legitimately on magazine covers, newspaper spreads/ We are AfroReggae from Vigário Geral.<sup>98</sup>

Indeed, AfroReggae's universally appealing message against violence is entwined with a carefully manufactured attitude communicating the group's peripheral identity. Even their choice of name, AfroReggae, conveys their negritude and affirms the group's pride in their identity as black favela residents;<sup>99</sup> this formula of combining social protest and racial and territorial pride results in a politically charged identity that privileges self-confidence and attitude.<sup>100</sup>

AfroReggae began primarily as a community-based music group to attract young people in the favela away from narcotrafficking; however, the group registered as an NGO and rapidly

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<sup>98</sup> AfroReggae, "Capa De Revista," *Nova Cara*, Universal Music, CD, 2000. Translation from *Favela Rising*, documentary, directed by Matt Mochary and Jeff Zimbalist, Rio de Janeiro: Ravi Anne, 2005.

<sup>99</sup> While Négritude is a French ideological movement emphasizing a shared black identity and critiquing French racism and colonialism, AfroReggae embraces the pride associated with Négritude but rejects notions of a collective consciousness.

<sup>100</sup> Sílvia Ramos, "Brazilian responses to violence and new forms of mediation: the case of the Grupo Cultural AfroReggae and the experience of the project "Youth and the Police," *Ciência & Saúde Coletiva*, 11 (2006): 423, accessed January 28, 2012.

transformed into a stage for dialogue between favela and state, *asfalto* and *morro*, favela and favela. Though territoriality remains contentious, and favela residents rarely enter neighboring favelas, AfroReggae expanded into favelas Parada de Lucas, Ramos, Cantagalo, and Complexo do Alemão opening theater, *capoeira*, and circus schools.<sup>101</sup> Furthermore, the group exercised their visibility in the formal and informal city with their project “Urban Connections,” a series of concerts presenting successful and well-known artists inside favela territories in an attempt to introduce the communities to a diverse audience ranging from public administrators to foreign visitors. Therefore, while AfroReggae is not the only or necessarily even the most effective method to keep young people away from narco-trafficking, it is clear that the group serves as a type of first-person narrative aiming to create alternatives to the stereotypical image of the favela as a war zone relegated to drugs and criminals.<sup>102</sup> “Urban Connections” proves that marketability can be manipulated to affirm peripheral locations and identities, and it is AfroReggae’s attention to their consumer appeal that places the group in a unique position

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<sup>101</sup> The AfroReggae Circus School in Cantagalo serves as a particularly interesting example of how the organization successfully entered neighboring communities. The school is located in the Brizolão is a hotel come community center in the *zona sul* favela, Cantagalo. Originally built as a five star hotel in the late 70s, the structure is nestled in the hills, a strategy that was meant to provide excellent views of Copacabana beach and the Two Brothers Mountains. However, by the time the hotel was completed in the early 1980s, the crime from narco-trafficking had infiltrated Cantagalo rendering the favela dangerous and inhospitable for tourists. The hotel was finished, but left completely abandoned as a massive symbol of wealth and opulence amid the impoverished favela. Eventually, the hotel came under the control of the government, and in an attempt improve conditions in the favela, the Governor of State, Brizola, inaugurated the structure as a Centro Integrado de Educação Pública (CIEP) or public school for the community. Furthermore, The Fundação de Apoio à Escola Técnica (FAETEC) or adult education program began functioning in the building as well. The reclamation of the hotel inspired very real and creative forms of community engagement. After rooms in the structure were designated for education, community members were prompted to question what the site needed in order to reflect their own vision of local identity. In response, rooms in the Brizolão were allocated for adult and children’s sports; boxing, surfing, *capoeira*, jujitsu, ballet, samba, and soccer classes are just a few of the organizations spearheaded by local community members of Cantagalo. Proving that relationships between favelas can be beneficial, AfroReggae was invited to install an AfroCircus school that attracts students from the *morro* as well as the *asfalto*. Therefore, the reappropriation of space in the Brizolão resulted in creative social practices that, like AfroReggae, dismantled barriers between favela and state, *asfalto* and *morro*, favela and favela. Isabell Erdmann, Cantagalo resident, in discussion with the author, October 26, 2011.

<sup>102</sup> There are a significant number of religious groups, governmental organizations, and sports clubs that are also devoted to diverting young people away from narco-trafficking. However, these groups function outside the favela as opposed to AfroReggae, an initiative by the favela for the favela. Ramos, “Brazilian responses to violence and new forms of mediation,” 424.

amongst other NGOs.<sup>103</sup> As a result of their persistent presence in the formal and informal communities, AfroReggae has become one of Brazil's most visible proponents of racial, social, and economic equality.

While AfroReggae gained recognition throughout Vigário Geral and Rio de Janeiro for its innovative use of percussion, *capoeira*, and sociocultural critique, the group's status as an NGO helps foster relationships with police, politicians, celebrities, and local and international media outlets.<sup>104</sup> In 2002 the group even signed a contract with mainstream American recording studio Universal Records. However, AfroReggae also instituted a local newspaper and radio program solidifying their commitment to locality and community despite their global presence. Indeed, while the globalizing forces associated with the media, consumerism, and the formal market economy are often considered sources of oppression, AfroReggae manipulates their mainstream visibility in order to mobilize their message of social justice.<sup>105</sup> Public security and citizenship expert Sílvia Ramos terms AfroReggae a type of "new mediator" characterized by the groups dependence on market-driven consumerism, investment in individual lives and the fostering of unique subjectivities, strong interest in community paired with an adherence to the tools of globalization, and commitment to conveying their peripheral radical and economic

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<sup>103</sup> Ibid., 424.

<sup>104</sup> One particularly interesting project that is, unfortunately, outside the scope of this paper that examines interventions specifically in Rio de Janeiro, is "Youth and the Police," a participatory project between AfroReggae the Military Police of Minas Gerais in Belo Horizonte. In 2002, one of the founding members of AfroReggae was hit by a stray police bullet, and despite the decidedly antipolice nature of the group, they decided to develop a project working with the police as opposed to against them. Carried out with the help of the Ford Foundation, the project was finally realized in 2004. "Youth and the Police" aimed to establish a dialogue between band members and police officials through creative activities. By 2005, the project was considered so successful that the partnership continued, and negotiations began in initiating a similar experiment with Rio's police. "Youth and the Police" is considered a success because it takes each party out of their defensive mindset, creates new experiences for everyone involved, calls into question the stereotypical images of "military police" and "favela youth." Most importantly, the entire endeavor was documented by the press, which facilitated a new we/they relationship: we, the participants working together, and they, media outlets eager to observe the uncommon exchange. Ramos, "Brazilian responses to violence and new forms of mediation," 426.

<sup>105</sup> George Yúdice, "AfroReggae: Parlaying Culture into Social Justice," *Social Text* 69 (2001): 53.

identities through self-esteem and attitude.<sup>106</sup> Working from the social, racial, and economic periphery, AfroReggae could easily indulge in homogenizing ideas of cohesive unity and collective identity;<sup>107</sup> however, the group resists essentialism in favor of a politics of difference that enables its members to navigate through social classes, media, and government, local and global.<sup>108</sup> AfroReggae serves as an example of a grassroots community-based project that is capable of manipulating its location at the periphery, transforming the signifier of inequality into a sign of possibility.

## V. Constructing First-Person Narratives

What initiatives like The Morrinho Project and AfroReggae have in common is their emphasis on locally based agency and activism; these projects motivated by locals operate from within and throughout the favela. Udi Mandel Butler and Marcelo Princeswal claim that young people engaging in participatory social practices consistently convey renewed feelings of identification, belonging, and pride in being part of racial, ethnic, or class-based constituency.<sup>109</sup> Given that Brazil is a country marked by deep social and economic disparity, gender and race inequality, feelings that motivate the emergence of a critical consciousness are significant. These grassroots projects help instigate molecular revolutions, a concept coined by Felix Guattari. He further describes these molecular or micro-revolutions as a diverse range of personal and social practices that contribute to “auto-valorizations and militant actions, leading, through a systematic decentering of social desire, to soft subversions and imperceptible

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<sup>106</sup> Ramos, “Brazilian responses to violence and new forms of mediation,” 423.

<sup>107</sup> Jeffrey W. Rubin, “Meanings and Mobilizations: A Cultural Politics Approach to Social Movements and States,” *Latin American Research Review* 39 (2004): 128.

<sup>108</sup> Ramos, “Brazilian responses to violence and new forms of mediation,” 424.

<sup>109</sup> Udi Mandel Butler and Marcelo Princeswal, “Cultures of Participation: Young People’s Engagement in the Public Sphere in Brazil,” *Non-Governmental Public Action Programme* 6 (2008): 9.

revolutions that will eventually change the face of the world, making it happier.”<sup>110</sup> Indeed, young people’s involvement in community-based practices aiming to re-vision the favela and its inhabitants through a positive lens contribute to molecular revolutions that incite feelings of self-worth and belonging.

While it is not entirely necessary that community-based projects be internally motivated, it is clear that successful projects must place an emphasis on imagination, agency, and the construction of unique subjectivities. Therefore, effective negotiations give visibility to the favelas but refuse to speak on their behalf.<sup>111</sup> Brazilian educator and theorist Paulo Freire recognizes the struggle to speak *with*, not *for* marginal populations,<sup>112</sup> and he claims that the fight for liberation must be articulated from the inside, “In order for the oppressed to be able to wage the struggle for their liberation, they must perceive the reality of oppression not as a closed world from which there is no exit, but as a limiting situation which they can transform.”<sup>113</sup> Further, socially engaged and locally based projects become tools aiding in the creation of dialogue between the center and periphery, and it is through this dialogue that humanity is

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<sup>110</sup> Felix Guattari, *Soft Subversions: Texts and Interviews: 1977-1985* (Los Angeles: Semiotext(e), 2009), 306.

<sup>111</sup> See Guyatri Spivak, “Can The Subaltern Speak?” Spivak’s essay identifies the problems inherent in the relationship between the Western postcolonial studies scholar and the subaltern subject, but her premise is applicable in terms of the favela and its marginal status. She claims that efforts to give the marginalized a voice can often lead to speaking on their behalf. It is this issue of “speaking for” of “re-presenting” that tends to emulate neo-colonial paradigms based on cultural erasure, economic exploitation, and political domination. Furthermore, Spivak claims that the Western intellectual studying the subaltern cannot maintain an objective voice because s/he is always complicit with Western economic interests. Spivak grounds her ideas about epistemic violence in her examination of the marginal Indian tradition of widow’s self-immolation during which the widow sacrifices herself on top of her husband’s funeral pyre. This fairly rare tradition was banished by the British colonists in an act that Spivak calls, “White men saving brown women from brown men.” Therefore, in the wake of this tradition’s relocation as illegal in the colonial context, Indian men repurposed it as a sign of nativist resistance. However, it is clear that this tradition as it was understood by the actual women who took part in it, is lost. Therefore, Spivak claims that to give the subaltern widow a voice is to reaffirm both a narrative in which the subaltern belongs to a homogenous population and a relationship in which the non-Western subaltern is dependent on the Western intellectual to speak on her behalf. Therefore, it is important that projects dealing with the favelas work towards the construction of first-person narratives. Spivak, Gayatri, “Can The Subaltern Speak?” in *Marxism and the Interpretation of Culture*, edited by Cary Nelson and Lawrence Grossberg (London: Macmillan, 1988).

<sup>112</sup> Paulo Freire, *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*, 48.

<sup>113</sup> Ibid., 49.

restituted to both the oppressor and the oppressed. People are restored the ability to “name the world,” transforming it into something more useful for everyone.<sup>114</sup> While community-based projects do not necessarily have to be inaugurated from within the community, it is vital that any project help motivate an internal consciousness, imagination, and meaningful conversation.

Notably, The Morrinho Project and AfroReggae stress the value of communication and dialogue in an attempt to render the favela visible and intelligible in the formal community. Both projects encourage young people to disengage from their daily lives in order to reflect on lived experiences and identify the power relations that dictate life in the favela.<sup>115</sup> Further, both projects have evolved to incorporate a range of alternative media outlets. The Morrinho Project developed TV Morrinho and released an autobiographical documentary, and AfroReggae initiated a newspaper and radio program in efforts to create first-person narratives that serve as alternatives to traditional representations circulating in the mass media. This process of critique and re-representation questions misguided depictions of the urban poor as criminals and instead enables young people to produce texts and images that allow them to truly see their communities and tell their own stories.<sup>116</sup> The use of alternative media provokes critical reflections allowing young people the ability to re-imagine the city and their place within it.

Furthermore, future participatory projects working in Brazil’s favela communities may benefit from placing an even greater emphasis on the construction of first person narratives that challenge preconceived notions of what constitutes center and periphery. Successful narratives from the margins simultaneously decenter hegemonic knowledge and call attention to what Walter Mignolo calls “the colonality of being.” Mignolo defines this concept as not being

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<sup>114</sup> Ibid., 89.

<sup>115</sup> Butler and Princeswal, “Cultures of Participation,” 22.

<sup>116</sup> Ibid., 22.

whom one is supposed to be; being as not being.<sup>117</sup> Favela residents have established a critical consciousness based on not being seen as human, and therefore, it is necessary to revise conceptions of identity, history, and knowledge that have been constructed as Truth without input from the residents, themselves. Further, first person narratives from the periphery should build a world with principles other than those that have been naturalized in the past; those that enforce marginalization.<sup>118</sup> Another world is possible, but the world cannot be improved upon if it continues to function through the uncritical acceptance of stereotypes constructed by the mainstream.

Participatory projects that help engender imaginative approaches to rethinking the city are significant given that the very presence of the favelas challenges the politics of the city. These communities' visibility in the urban landscape displaces hegemonic narratives based on civility and progress in turn questioning the authenticity of those narratives.<sup>119</sup> Therefore, socially and culturally engaged practices aiming to re-vision Rio de Janeiro through processes involving the political implications of seeing and being seen function through a series of negotiations that open up new sites for possibility. Indeed, these sites of exchange are heterogeneous by nature, and they rely on new principles that enable creative and inventive forms of participation.<sup>120</sup> In other words, successful community-based programs aid in the creation of fresh spaces for mediation between the *morro* and *asfalto* because their presence in the city transcends arbitrary barriers. The first-person narratives established through community-based practices like The Morrinho Project and AfroReggae aid in the creation of urban

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<sup>117</sup> Mignolo, *The Idea of Latin America*, 63.

<sup>118</sup> *Ibid.*, 142.

<sup>119</sup> Jonathan Rutherford, "The Third Space: Interview with Homi Bhabha," in *Identity: Community, Culture, Difference*, ed. Jonathan Rutherford, (London: Lawrence and Wishart, 2003), 218.

<sup>120</sup> *Ibid.*, 216.



imaginaries that subvert, question, and negotiate real and metaphorical boundaries, boundaries that are capable of stripping people's lives of value.

Socially engaged projects aiming to render the favela visible and intelligible through participatory practices that engender a collective reimagining of the city are, essentially, reclaiming the city and the favelas' place within it. These projects reshape the daily lives of people living in informal communities, but they also alter the way those lives are perceived from the outside. The line between formal and informal becomes unclear, and Brazilian writer Zuenir Ventura's concept of Rio de Janeiro as *A Cidade Partida*, or The Divided City,<sup>121</sup> is rendered increasingly unstable. Therefore, community-based art practices that transform the favela from the inside out in an attempt to reimagine the world contribute to the creation of another city, a city that privileges heterogeneous ways of being, living, and doing. Projects re-visioning an urban imaginary marked by inclusion as opposed to displacement help reify auto-construction as a legitimate way of placemaking, but they also help prove that it is possible to build another city through a politics of difference.

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<sup>121</sup> Zuenir Ventura, *A Cidade Partida* (Companhia das Letras, São Paulo, 1994).

### 3. Favela Museums and the Positive Effects of Globalization

#### I. The Precarious Politics of the (Favela) Museum

“What are the differences between a school, a prison, a zoo, and an open-air museum?”<sup>122</sup> This rhetorical question posted unofficially and anonymously at the Cuzals open-air museum in France calls attention to the precarious position held by non-traditional museums as didactic, idealist, and contained places of representation and re-presentation.<sup>123</sup> In Rio de Janeiro, open-air favela museums that motivate alternative histories, touristic gazes, and scorn from city elites often receive similarly confused reactions marked by both criticism and praise. Indeed, the politics differentiating school, prison, zoo, or museum become especially muddled in these institutions embedded in traditionally excluded and underprivileged zones. However, upon further scrutiny it becomes clear that favela museums are capable of facilitating community-oriented participation, the improvisation of spaces, and the revitalization of built environments helping residents and tourists imbue informal communities, their architecture, land, and people, with pertinence. Through the examination of three museums located in Rio de Janeiro’s favelas, I will emphasize the importance of political subjectivity and globalization in the maintenance of informal communities as places worth commemorating. The transformation of a favela into a museum is a creative tactic that simultaneously subverts the hegemony of the formal city and revitalizes the relevance of past and present social practices operating within the favela.

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<sup>122</sup> Paul Oliver, “Re-Presenting and Representing the Vernacular: The Open-Air Museum,” in *Consuming Tradition, Manufacturing Heritage: Global Norms and Urban Forms in the Age of Tourism*, ed. Nezar AlSayyad (London: Routledge, 2001), 205.

<sup>123</sup> Drawing similar correlations between the museum institution and prison system, Tony Bennett’s “The Exhibitionary Complex” details the ways in which these two work to control the public by broadcasting messages of power. Drawing on Michel Foucault’s *Discipline and Punish* and Gramscian notions of the state, Bennett claims that museums serve as tools to encourage public bodies to self-regulate through the relationship between vision and power that is embodied in architecture. Bodies become sites for behavior modification in structures that function as panopticons, specifically the Crystal Palace and the penitentiary. The architecture of the museum and prison was modified to promote public order, and these centers of power became institutions of instruction and rhetoric aiming to incorporate the public into the workings of the state. The exhibition becomes a civilizing tool as knowledge becomes a way to display power. Tony Bennett, “The Exhibitionary Complex,” in *Grasping the World: The Idea of the Museum*, ed. Donald Preziosi et al. (Burlington, VT, Ashgate Publishing, 2004).

Through egalitarian notions of placemaking that privilege plurality, collaboration, and meaningful experiences, favela museums speak to the changing role of informal communities in urban society and the possibility that this metamorphosis entails. Furthermore, favela museums toy with globalizing, leveling pressures in an attempt to enact their own itinerary and mutate constraining spaces to establish an art of doing based on multiplicity and creativity.

Of key interest is the fact that museums are a Western tradition and product of globalization; thus the conversations within favela museums are automatically framed by a non-local construct. In eighteenth century Europe, the museum industry burgeoned as artworks were considered to hold spiritually, morally, and emotionally transformative qualities. Notions of taste and beauty developed in conjunction with art criticism, and the museum became the proper setting for the contemplation of art.<sup>124</sup> During the twentieth century, aesthetic museums privileged works of art as objects created solely for formal examination, and the museum's mission was primarily to engage in a dialogue with the past.<sup>125</sup> Indeed, devices of the aesthetic museum survive in contemporary museological trends; uncluttered exhibition designs, compartmentalized spaces for artworks and educational materials, and individual lighting are just a few of the characteristics of the aesthetic museum that persist in contemporary contexts.<sup>126</sup>

As favela museums diverge from the traditions naturalized by the Western museum institution, it is clear that who is represented, who speaks through the museum, is a shifting problematic. Museums have historically been conceived as spaces relegated to the preserves of high culture, but internally initiated favela museums serve as counterpoints to academically driven teleological institutions. While aesthetic museums foster conversations with the past,

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<sup>124</sup> Carol Duncan, "The Art Museum as Ritual," *The Art of Art History* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009), 430.

<sup>125</sup> Ibid., 432.

<sup>126</sup> Ibid., 433.

favela museums prove successful in blending heterogeneous times, places, and identities to speak to a population that is in constant flux and perpetually incomplete. Further, as contemporary trends in museum display transform the gallery into a timeless, hermetic non-place emptied of identity,<sup>127</sup> favela museums imbue informal communities with local distinctions that counteract commonplace notions that liken the favela to a non-place.

## II. Collaboration, Metamorphosis, and Plurality in the Museu da Maré

In terms of successfully negotiated and internally motivated favela museums, collaboration, communication, and social organization are most clearly demonstrated by the Museu da Maré. On May 8, 2006, the Museu da Maré was founded in the *zona norte* Maré complex, the population of which is distributed across sixteen communities with a combined thirty-eight thousand households. The Museu da Maré is a non-traditional and participatory community effort that documents and preserves the daily practices and tangible and intangible customs of the people who construct the Maré community. Still holding one of the worst Human Development Indexes in the city of Rio de Janeiro, the Maré Complex was originally founded in the 1930s as an industrial region attracting factories and commercial activity.<sup>128</sup> Low-income employees created small slums near the factories, and the neighborhoods eventually expanded outward into swamplands, necessitating the construction of stilt houses (fig. 18). In fact *maré*, meaning “tide” in Portuguese, refers to the seasonal tide that brings snakes, rats, and disease into the community that, architecturally, originally consisted of precarious and dangerous houses

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<sup>127</sup> Elena Filipovic, “The Global White Cube,” in *The Manifest Decade: Debates on Contemporary Art Exhibitions and Biennials in Post-Wall Europe*, ed. Barbara Vanderlinden et al. (Cambridge: The MIT Press, 2005), 67.

<sup>128</sup> Lillian Fessler Vaz, “Hybrid Territories in Rio de Janeiro: New Challenges in the Unplanned City,” (paper presented at Urban Transformations: Controversies Contrasts, and Challenges, Istanbul, Turkey, July 12-15, 2010), 2.

hovering above the swamp. Nevertheless, de-industrialization left gaping holes in the community as factories were closed and abandoned.<sup>129</sup>

The origins of the Museu da Maré date back to the 1980s when a small group of residents became interested in mobilizing the community through the preservation of local memory. Interestingly, each member of the group held a university degree during a period when less than 0.6% of the local population had access to higher education.<sup>130</sup> In 1997, the Centro de Estudos e Ações Solidárias da Maré (Center of Study and Solidarity Action of Maré) was founded as a community organization aiming to prepare students for higher education while inculcating into their consciousness a sense of pride for their neighborhood. In 2003, the organization secured an abandoned naval factory within the favela, the product of de-industrialization in the 90s, in order to develop the Maré Culture House, part of which is the Museu da Maré.

Now considered the first favela museum in the country, The Museu da Maré's permanent exhibition is a community-wide collaboration that links memory, social action, and resistance through twelve phases of cyclical time divisions: the time of the house, water, the market, faith, resistance, migration, celebration, work, daily life, fear, childhood, and finally, the future. These divisions emphasize the coexistence of lived and living experiences and the link between the past and present.<sup>131</sup> Furthermore, the exhibition consists of objects donated by local people in an attempt to tell old and new stories with diverse points of view. Archival documents, everyday objects, personal photographs, and devotional images are added and subtracted to the exhibition-in-flux creating a narrative that is never complete or one-dimensional. All donations are

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<sup>129</sup> Deindustrialization had an interesting effect on housing in the favela as well. Many of the abandoned factories were converted into what Lillian Fessler Vaz calls "post-industrial favelas." Homeless people began to invade the large empty storage rooms, subdividing them and converting the spaces into homes. Lillian Fessler Vaz, "Hybrid Territories in Rio de Janeiro," 2.

<sup>130</sup> Paula Assunção dos Santos, "Museu da Maré: A Museum Full of Soul," *Curator: The Museum Journal* 55 (2012): 25.

<sup>131</sup> *Ibid.*, 27.

accepted, but people can also easily reclaim their loans, which contributes to the organic ebb and flow of the collection. The donated personal objects are juxtaposed with neighborhood trash or detritus that signifies the nature of life in Maré. For instance, a box of bullet shells collected by local residents testifies to the rampant violence in the area (fig. 19). Also, objects are frequently added to reflect or comment on current events and activities; for example, an artwork was recently added to the Time of Childhood after a local child died from a stray bullet.<sup>132</sup> Therefore, the permanent exhibition in the Museu da Maré is an archive of memories and objects that reflect plural visions of local identity.

The central feature of the Museu da Maré's permanent exhibition is a full-sized reconstruction of a *palafita*, or stilt house (fig. 20). This type of architecture is a testament to the community's arduous history, but the stilt house was imbued with new meaning in the days preceding the museum's official opening. The reconstruction of the house became a trigger for community participation; when the *palafita* was constructed, the museum had not collected sufficient objects to fill the interior, but by word of mouth, people began spontaneously bringing objects, organizing, and decorating the space (fig. 21). Throughout the days and nights leading up to the museum opening, people sat on the floor of the *palafita* telling stories and recounting memories. The house became a mobilizing force within the community as volunteers traveled to cut shelving paper, design the interior, and tell the personal stories of their lives. Therefore, the house that was originally only meant to document the past was enlivened through conversations that rendered the space contemporary and relevant.<sup>133</sup>

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<sup>132</sup> Ibid., 27.

<sup>133</sup> Ibid., 30.

The Museu da Maré's co-option of a naval factory serves as an example of how foreign spaces can be rearticulated as one's own. In fact, philosopher Henri Lefèbvre discusses similar reappropriations of space through the concept of diversion:

An existing space may outlive its original purpose and *raison d'être* that determines its forms, functions, and structures; it may thus in a sense become vacant, and susceptible to being diverted, reappropriated, and put to a use quite different than its initial one [...] The diversion and reappropriation of space are of great significance, for they teach us much about the production of new spaces.<sup>134</sup>

While the naval factory is a post-industrial scar within the favela that was originally recouped out of the necessity to improvise adequate spaces, the transformation of a shipyard into a museum inspired very real and creative forms of community engagement. The participatory and democratic nature of the museum's mission to preserve local heritage prompted community members to question what the site needed in order to reflect their own visions of local identity.<sup>135</sup> In response, local residents donate or loan personal objects, contribute suggestions, and volunteer to create a truly symbiotic relationship between the museum and the community. Therefore, the reappropriation of de-industrial space resulted in creative social practices that motivate people to interact with the places they inhabit and create. The metamorphosis of an abandoned shipyard into a community museum is an example of how people reconceptualize space as something capable of serving a local population's needs.

### III. Self-Representation and Interaction in The Museu de Favela

In 2008, the *zona sul* favela Cantagalo and its neighboring favelas Pavão and Pavãozinho inaugurated the Museu de Favela, an open-air museum that spans the hilly terrain of the three communities that loom above Ipanema and Copacabana beaches. Cantagalo, Pavão, and Pavãozinho are typical examples of Rio de Janeiro's *zona sul* favelas in which poorer

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<sup>134</sup> Henri Lefebvre, *The Production of Space*, 167.

<sup>135</sup> Nadezhda Dimitrova Savova, "Heritage Kinaesthetics: Local Constructivism and UNESCO's Intangible-Tangible Politics at a Favela Museum," *Anthropological Quarterly* 82.2 (2009): 552.

neighborhoods developed in close proximity to the city's most economically prosperous districts. Indeed, while Cantagalo provides excellent views of the city's famous landscape, lookouts from the top of the hill also reveal perhaps the city's most jarring distinction between *morro* and *asfalto* (fig. 22).

Museu de Favela claims to be the first live territorial museum in the world meaning that the entirety of the favela, the open sewage, the pirated electrical wires, and the satellite television dishes, are part of the museum complex. The twenty thousand favela residents are transformed into live archives that preserve a cultural heritage that has been left out of the history of Rio de Janeiro. Further, more than four fifths of the museum's sixteen founders live within the favela as artists, journalists, composers, and musicians and have agreed to take on responsibilities outlined as part of the museum's mission:

They assumed a long-term commitment: to work for the valorization of the collective cultural memory; for the strengthening of the good community character; for the creation of a vision of the future that will transform the living conditions in the favela through memories and local culture, wrapped up in the format of a territorial museum.<sup>136</sup>

While defending the dignity of its residents and lobbying for social and cultural equality, the museum is also very specific in its interest in turning Cantagalo into the city's primary tourist site for education about the culture of the favela that includes the history of migrations, natural disasters, Samba, and black history.<sup>137</sup>

The primary component of Cantagalo's favela-museum is the Casas-Telas, a project that transformed twenty houses in the community into canvases. Local artists were commissioned to create large-scale graffiti-style murals depicting the history, progress, and present of the communities. The favela's older residents recounted memories and traditions distinct to the

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<sup>136</sup> Founding Members, accessed Nov. 23, 2011, <http://www.museudefavela.org/about-muf/?lang=en>.

<sup>137</sup> About the MUF, accessed Nov. 23, 2011, <http://www.museudefavela.org/about-muf/?lang=en>.



Cantagalo, Pavão and Pavãozinho<sup>138</sup> creating a type of participatory storytelling that commemorates lived experiences. Some paintings tell difficult stories of natural disaster, migration, and displacement while others depict simpler narratives of favela residents' in their plight to secure adequate trash disposal, electricity, water, and sewage. A large-scale image of a girl carrying water on her head speaks to the years in the favela without running water; women had to walk down the hill to fetch fresh water and then make the difficult climb back up with the jugs balanced on their heads (fig. 23). The text accompanying the mural recounts the putrid smell and rats that infiltrated the streets due to a lack of sanitation and recalls the common image of the favela residents as “pigeons without wings” perched and relieving themselves in the alleyways due to the lack of indoor plumbing.

The Museu de Favela is a community-initiated museum meant to engage tourists as well as favela residents. People's living spaces are transformed into murals, and in each case, the resident is responsible for maintaining and preserving the artwork.<sup>139</sup> In Cantagalo, Pavão and Pavãozinho, residents have taken an active role to create a museum that provides visibility to spaces that were previously marginalized. Furthermore, the inauguration of the favela as a museum is a tactic that aims to disturb the boundary between the supposedly culturally rich *asfalto* and the impoverished *morro*. The museum helps incorporate the favela as a part of Brazil's social and spatial politics while maintaining a socially and culturally distinct heritage. Resisting marginalization but also globalizing sameness, Cantagalo's residents have created a large-scale urban installation that commemorates minor histories and forgotten spaces.

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<sup>138</sup> Isabell Erdmann, favela resident, in discussion with the author, October 26.

<sup>139</sup> Isabell Erdmann, favela resident, in discussion with the author, October 26.

Therefore, ordinary residents are transformed into artists capable of realizing a new world through existing realities.<sup>140</sup>

The Museu de Favela embraces the visual cues already inherent in the favela to motivate residents to actively see the value of their built environment in new and different ways.<sup>141</sup> The large-scale murals engage with architecture, spectacular views, and past and present human experiences creating an ecosystem of signification (fig. 24). Indeed, the Museu de Favela encourages residents to become tourists and active lookers who learn about the people, places, histories, and politics of their own neighborhood. Furthermore, the museum becomes a catalyst for community conversations about what is important for the preservation of local heritage and why.<sup>142</sup> Nadezhda Dimitrova Savova describes the circulation of creative ideas amongst residents as “local constructivism, which embraces the ways in which locals socially construct and perform memory, values, and senses of belonging.”<sup>143</sup> The Museu de Favela is an institution that legitimizes the favela as an integral part of Rio de Janeiro and a historically rich locus for investigation. Citizens from the *morro* and the *asfalto* are encouraged to look beyond antagonistic differentiations of center and periphery, and as the favela receives positive attention from the center, constructive differentiations build a mutual relationship between city and favela based on the recognition of rich historical and cultural diversity.<sup>144</sup> So finally, historically marginalized people and places are granted visibility through social practices that privilege seeing and interacting with the built environment in new and transformative ways.

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<sup>140</sup> Lucy Lippard, *On the Beaten Track: Tourism, Art and Place*, (New York: The New Press, 1999).

<sup>141</sup> Savova, “Heritage Kinaesthetics,” 557.

<sup>142</sup> Lippard, *Beaten Track*, 347

<sup>143</sup> Savova, “Heritage Kinaesthetics,” 559.

<sup>144</sup> *Ibid.*, 570.

#### IV. Tourism and the Favela, or The Gaze is Mutual

Favela museums are sometimes criticized for promoting the romanticization of poverty or poverty voyeurism,<sup>145</sup> but this is a simplistic analysis of how tourism may affect the favela.<sup>146</sup> Cultural tourism scholar Camila Moraes claims the tourism that accompanied the inauguration of the Museu de Favela is actually a positive reaffirmation of life and culture in the favela communities because tours led by residents working for the museum are aiming to present a new image of the favela, one that is not seen in the newspapers.<sup>147</sup> Furthermore, the notion of tourism as an economic stimulus is a major motivation in tourism-driven development plans that aim to resignify the favelas as alternatives to more traditional tourist spots. However, it is clear that there remains an insider/outsider dichotomy in reference to who conducts favela tours and how the tour is executed. The Museu de Favela developed a type of tourism in direct opposition to the now infamous Jeep tours that circulate through Rocinha, Rio de Janeiro's largest and most frequently studied favela. The museum's first official newsletter references the voyeuristic and exploitative tone of the Jeep tours that only perpetuate the us/them binary that already plagues the informal communities:

One [person] said 'let's open a gallery of graffiti art in the community,' another, 'Let's do a documentary telling the story of the hill,' another, 'Let's show tourists that the slums have a better side than what is shown in other [...] slums where tourists and foreigners [think the slum is a zoo, and the] slum dweller is an animal.'<sup>148</sup>

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<sup>145</sup> Adrianna Navarro Sertich, "Follow the Yellow Brick Road:: Morro de Providencia's Open Air Museum," *FAVELIssues*, May 6, 2010, <http://favelissues.com/2010/05/06/follow-the-yellow-brick-road-morro-da-providencias-open-air-museum>.

<sup>146</sup> Bianca Freire-Medeiros notes that there are two types of reality tours: social tours and dark tours. Social tours encourage participation as a counterpoint to destructive ideas of mass tourism. For example, the NGP Global Exchange offers socially minded tours that privilege awareness over comfort. On the other hand, dark tourism is the commodification of real sited of death and disaster, for example, trips to Chernobyl. Each example signifies that tourists are more actively seeking experiences considered "authentic," unusual, and adventurous. Bianca Freire-Medeiros, "Selling the Favela: Thoughts and Polemics About a Tourist Destination," *Revista Brasileira de Ciências Sociais* 22 (2007): 8.

<sup>147</sup> Camila Moraes, *Turismo e o Museu De Favela: Um Caminho Para Novas Imagens das Favelas do Rio de Janeiro*, *Revista Electronica De Turismo Cultural* 4 (2010): 12.

<sup>148</sup> The First Official Newsletter of the Museu de Favela, 2

Indeed, Rocinha's Jeep, and now motor bike, tours are facilitated by tourist agencies like Be A Local, Don't Be a Gringo, the name of which speaks to recent "authentic" or "native" trends in tourism, and promoted in hotels and hostels as a gritty adventure for the offbeat tourist looking to explore Rio's lesser known neighborhoods.<sup>149</sup>

Favela tourism remains a contentious topic, which is most clearly demonstrated by the Brazilian newspaper *O Estado de São Paulo*'s 2007 poll asking, "Should tourism in favelas be encouraged?". Nearly 80% of readers claimed that the concept of promoting the favelas as if they were landmarks in line with Sugar Loaf and Christ Redeemer was revolting and an aberration.<sup>150</sup> However, while local elites tend to decry the concept, favela residents have largely embraced the notion of tourist-driven development.<sup>151</sup> The hypothesis that favela tourism propagates a zoo-like observational atmosphere is overdetermined,<sup>152</sup> and while there is no denying the imbalanced relationship between favela resident and tourist, the gaze of curiosity is mutual.<sup>153</sup> Further, hotels and hostels are becoming more prevalent in Rio's favelas, many operating under the notion that tourists are safer in the favelas than in highly populated petty

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<sup>149</sup> The concept of poverty or reality tourism has quickly escalated to become a global phenomenon. Interestingly, Reality Tours and Travel co-founder Christopher Way was motivated to convert Dharavi, Mumbai's largest informal community, into a tourist destination after taking a tour through Rocinha. Since January 2006, Way's business has offered tours of the community for US\$7.00 per person. Bianca Friere-Medeiros, "The Favela and its Touristic Transits," *Geoforum* 40 (2009): 587.

<sup>150</sup> Ibid., 587.

<sup>151</sup> It is worth noting that even in Rocinha, local residents accept responsible types of favela tourism. While outside tourist agencies originally monopolized the market, tour guides living in the favela are emerging.

<sup>152</sup> In her article, "Antagonism and Relational Aesthetics," Claire Bishop reflects on similar ideas in reference to Thomas Hirschorn's *Bataille Monument* constructed as part of Documenta XI. The ad-hoc monument was located in Nordstadt, a suburb of Kassel, on a lawn surrounded by housing projects. Documenta visitors participated in the off-site project by way of taxicabs that dropped them in the community, the ethnic and economic makeup of which is not in line with Documenta's normal target audience. Rather than the local population being subjected to the "zoo effect," Hirschorn claims that visitors are made to feel like intruders. The monument ultimately destabilized notions of community identity and crystallized the fact that the "zoo effect" is mutual. Bishop claims that works like Hirschorn's that sustain tension rather than promote belonging are ultimately more successful in terms of the meaningful conversations that emerge. Relying on Chantal Mouffe's theory of social antagonism, Bishop concludes that Hirschorn's works demonstrate valuable understandings of democracy as unrelieved tension, and therefore, his works are fundamentally better art than works that look to mend social differences. Bishop, "Antagonism and Relational Aesthetics," 2004.

<sup>153</sup> Bianca Friere-Medeiros, "Selling the Favela," 22.

crime-ridden areas like Copacabana.<sup>154</sup> Regardless, clearly demonstrated through the quickly growing favela tourism industry, visitors are increasingly interested in exploring the supposed authenticity and exoticism that favela communities are generally considered to harbor.

The Museu da Maré and Museu de Favela are two examples in which a community-wide collaboration resulted in the formation of a grassroots-type institution. In each case, favela residents worked in tandem to develop new and innovative ways to re-signify their communities as legitimate places capable of creating culture. The inauguration of museums, typically considered elite, church-like, high-culture preserves, in Rio's favelas is both a demand for recognition and sign of the changing role of informal communities in Brazilian society. The Museu da Maré's founding organization, the CAESM, has been invited by the Brazilian Institute of Museums of the Ministry of Culture to curate exhibitions in various museums, and the Museu de Favela now participates in Rio de Janeiro's museum week, which signals that these institutions have gained access to rights to make culture and generate tourism on their own terms. However, not all favela-based museums are successful self-defining institutions.

## **V. Conversations About Gentrification: The Open-air Museum, Morro da Providência**

In 2006, the Municipality of Rio de Janeiro declared the city's oldest favela, Morro da Providência, an "Open-air" or "Living" museum. Located in the central *zona portuária*, the favela originated in the nineteenth century after Rio de Janeiro's government promised some ten thousand soldiers housing after the Canudos Civil War in Bahia. Due to bureaucratic and legislative delays, the houses never materialized, and the soldiers began to occupy the hillside in the port region of Providência. This original informal settlement was called Morro da Favela,

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<sup>154</sup> While touring Rocinha before its occupation by the UPP, I was told by my tour guide that the drug traffickers would severely punish anyone caught stealing from tourists. The reasoning behind their strict rule enforcement lies in the fact that if tourists are victimized, injured, or murdered in the favela, the police will infiltrate the community and compromise the lively drug trade. Therefore, traficantes permeated the public areas of Rocinha visibly carrying automatic weapons and pistols. Renato da Silva, favela resident, in discussion with the author, October 27, 2011.

named after the thorny favela plant that permeates the hill. Today the favela is home to nearly five thousand people.

The open-air museum in Providência is the product of the *Projecto Favela-Barrio*, a city-wide slum upgrading initiative that aims to bring infrastructure to one hundred and sixty informal communities helping transform the favelas into *barrios*, or formal neighborhoods. Working in conjunction with the Municipality of Rio de Janeiro, *Favela-Barrio* project manager Lu Peterson claims to have chosen to insert a museum into the community based on intangible lived notions of heritage and Providência's unique historical significance as Rio's first favela.<sup>155</sup> Interestingly, the museum does not have a visual art component; instead the open-air museum consists of different paving treatments that create paths with lookouts and historic points throughout the neighborhood (fig. 25). The pathway begins at the neighborhood's large staircase constructed by slaves in the eighteenth century, then leads to the Church of Our Lady of the Prenha built in the 1860s, arrives at three view points overlooking the city's famous landscape, and finally ends at the nineteenth century Canudos Chapel and water reservoir.

Providência's open-air museum was originally conceived by the city municipality as a tool to aid tourism-driven regeneration within the favela.<sup>156</sup> However, the museum is rarely visited due to perceptions of local violence and personal danger, and the effort is largely considered a failure due to a lack of interest and commitment in the sustainability of the museum.<sup>157</sup> Even more, the few visitors that the museum does attract are often confused that the extent of the museum is a paving treatment that runs throughout the community, and many fail to

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<sup>155</sup> Savova, "Heritage Kinaesthetics," 553.

<sup>156</sup> In addition to aiding in tourist-driven development, Lu Peterson claims that the museum was also idealized as a crime deterrent. She claimed that a tourist presence would discourage drug activities; however, this facet of the project was soon proven unsuccessful. The church became an unintended target during a dispute between police and drug traffickers soon after the museum opened. Bianca Friere-Medeiros, "Selling the Favela," 21.

<sup>157</sup> Jake Cummings, "Morar Carioca: What's Not to Like?" *Rio On Watch*, August 1, 2011, accessed February 28, 2012, <http://rioonwatch.org/?p=1515>.

realize when or if they are actually in the museum.<sup>158</sup> Local residents were only tangentially involved in the inception and installation of the museum; the evidence of which is most obvious in frequent complaints about the destruction of the neighborhood soccer field to make room for the construction of a concrete cross in front of the Church of Our Lady. Orfeo, a local community artisan claims:

We grew up on the soccer field, and it was the joy of the community!... but now our kids will not be able to play... So what does this cross benefit us with? It belongs to the cemetery, it is a sign of death!  
They [the Municipality] wanted to clean the place for tourists... but what they did was step on [*pisar*] our culture, idealize our community!<sup>159</sup>

Furthermore, as the only open space in the favela, the soccer field also served as a point for evening meetings and conversations, but since the removal of the soccer field, residents claim that the space feels alien to them, and now the square remains empty.<sup>160</sup> Providência's open-air museum was largely unsuccessful because the plans did not consider what local residents would need from the site in order for it to benefit them. The museum did not emphasize social practices, communication, or participation, and as a result this institutionally constructed space ultimately failed in engaging favela residents or tourists.<sup>161</sup>

Instead of a tool to document and understand the historical and living cultural experiences in Morro da Providência, the government-installed open-air museum seems to have been a politically motivated and highly strategic move in a large-scale urban regeneration project.<sup>162</sup> Henri Lefebvre claims that neo-colonial tourist spaces are planned to convey illusions

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<sup>158</sup> Sertich, "Follow the Yellow Brick Road," accessed March 22, 2012.

<sup>159</sup> Savova, "Heritage Kinaesthetics," 567.

<sup>160</sup> Ibid., 568.

<sup>161</sup> In fact, many cariocas are unfamiliar with Providência's open-air museum altogether. When visiting Rio de Janeiro, my Museu de Favela tour guide Isabel Erdman, a favela resident herself, was unaware of the museum in Providência. Isabel Erdmann, favela resident, in discussion with the author, October 26, 2011.

<sup>162</sup> The museum was also conceived as a counterpoint to now defunct plans to build a Guggenheim Museum in the port area. Abandoned for lack of funding, the plans for the museum show the structure was to be built over water. Architecturally and thematically distinct, the Guggenheim and the open-air museum were designed to convey the

of transparency, “[These spaces are] planned with the greatest of care: centralized, organized, hierarchized, symbolized, and programmed to the *n*th degree, it serves the interests of tour-operators, bankers and entrepreneurs.”<sup>163</sup> Indeed, it is clear that the open-air museum has failed to benefit local populations; instead the inauguration of a tourist attraction within the favela was a tool to assist in the area’s gentrification. The favela museum is only one result of Porto Maravilha, a Public-Private-Partnership aiming to revitalize the city’s dilapidated port area due to its proximity to the city center. Furthermore, future plans for the port area include a new gondola that connects the favela, the train station, and the Carnival-based tourist attraction Samba City, a funicular tram, and most notably, the 2016 Olympic Village. Providência residents with houses located on or near future construction sites are currently being forcibly removed; originally the Mayor estimated that three hundred families would be relocated, then eight hundred, and now Providência residents claim that seventeen hundred families are facing eviction.<sup>164</sup>

However, despite the Municipality’s failure to communicate with or include Providência residents in the revitalization of their own living spaces, positive and interesting forms of community engagement emerged as a result of the government-initiated projects that began with the forcible transformation of Providência into an open-air museum. Throughout Rio de Janeiro, spray paint tags bearing the letters SMH, Secretaria Municipal de Habitação, indicate homes and buildings scheduled for removal. Recently, Providência residents with houses built on the street leading to the community’s iconic staircase have reported instances of returning home to find

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history and modernity inherent in Rio’s landscape (Savova, “Heritage Kinaesthetics,” 554). Furthermore, Joanne Sharp documents the “Guggenheim effect,” a method of urban regeneration in which iconic architecture and public art facilitate tourism, and even more, the regeneration of entire cities (Joanne Sharp et al., “Just Art for a Just City: Public Art and Social Inclusion in Urban Regeneration,” *Urban Studies* 42 (2005): 1020).

<sup>163</sup> Lefebvre, 59.

<sup>164</sup> Plataforma Dhesca Brasil, “Voices of the Mission- Morro da Providência,” accessed March 1, 2012, <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QocXg5q32m8>.



their houses tagged with SMH without further explanation or information. Building plans revealed that the government originally intended to remove houses on both side of the street: one side due to building projects and the other due to landslide risks. As a result, favela resident, photographer, and community activist Maurício Hora began protesting unnecessary removals by pasting enlarged black and white portraits of residents on the sides of their threatened homes (fig. 26).<sup>165</sup> Working in conjunction with street artist JR's Inside Out program that aims to convey messages of personal identity through works of art,<sup>166</sup> Hora photographed over one hundred residents. The teams at Inside Out enlarged and delivered the portraits that were then collaboratively pasted onto houses over three consecutive weekends, and the intervention quickly garnered press from the United Nations and the local media (fig. 27). Finally, despite previous refusals to alter construction plans, city officials moved the new building projects to the already at-risk areas, eliminating the unnecessary removal of dozens of homes.<sup>167</sup>

The open-air museum in Morro da Providência is a telling example in which a favela-based tourist attraction instituted from the top down helped motivate community-wide engagement. What began as a project to forcibly “regenerate” people’s living spaces through tourism-driven development quickly became an exercise of political subjectivity. The example of Providência crystallizes the importance of questioning who represents the favela, why, and to

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<sup>165</sup> In Detroit, Michigan, a project called DDD, or Detroit. Demolition. Disneyland., is changing the urban landscape in ways similar to Providência. This anonymous collective finds derelict houses marked with “D” for “demolition” and paints the structures Tiggerific orange, a color from the Mickey Mouse paint series. Out of four painted houses, two were quickly demolished creating an interesting cause and effect relationship with the city that calls into question the motivations for quickly destroying the houses. Furthermore, through an anonymous statement published through thedetroiter.com, DDD encourages people to help mobilize the project by painting abandoned houses Tiggerific orange in an attempt to motivate awareness of the city’s spiral into decay. Anonymous, “Detroit. Demolition. Disneyland: A Project, *The Detroiter*,” accessed March 20, 2012, <http://www.thedetroiter.com/nov05/disneydemolition.php>.

<sup>166</sup> JR developed Inside Out after winning the 2011 TED prize. Envisioning a world turned “inside out” through the inculcation of artwork into diverse people’s everyday lives, JR conceived of Inside Out Project as a way to engage a global audience in art discussions. For more information on JR’s Inside Out, visit <http://www.insideoutproject.net/#@section=home>.

<sup>167</sup> Zoe Roller, “Losing Providência,” *Rio On Watch*, December 12, 2011, accessed March 1, 2012, <http://rioonwatch.org/?p=2322>.

what end? Therefore, while Providência's open-air museum is not a self-defining institute in line with the Museu da Maré and the Museu de Favela, it was still the catalyst for similar types of community-centered social practices that motivate favela communities to cultivate and display unique subjectivities.

## VI. Strategies for Placemaking

The creative and collaborative forms of engagement that accompanied the installations of the three favela museums in question speak to the transformative possibilities that art, communication, and social organization have on informal communities. Indeed, these positive placemaking techniques transcend the museum space to affect the way people envision their place in the world. Russell Ferguson explains the potential power in subjectivity in reference to center/periphery dynamics in contemporary culture:

As historically marginalized groups insist on their own identity, the deeper structural invisibility of the so-called center becomes harder to sustain. The power of the center depends on a relatively unchallenged authority. If that point breaks down, then there remains no point relative to which other can be defined as marginal.<sup>168</sup>

Therefore, using favela museums as a catalyst to question marginality, hegemony, and the function of identity, favela residents construct a position in the world based not on opposition, but on positive notions of independent traditions and values.<sup>169</sup> Calling attention to Other places worth commemorating, favela residents are actually questioning the boundaries separating center and periphery, formal and informal.

Further complicating the role of the favela museum in contemporary culture, these institutions are a curious blend of local and global, crystallized in the fact that the museum structure is a product of western globalization, and therefore, the terms of discourse are

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<sup>168</sup> Russell Ferguson, "Introduction: Invisible Center," in *Out There: Marginalization in Contemporary Cultures*, ed. Russell Ferguson et al. (Cambridge: The MIT Press, 1990), 10.

<sup>169</sup> Ibid., 12.

automatically framed by a non-local construct. However, it is evident that these non-traditional favela museums are operating far outside the bounds of Brian O'Doherty's western notion of the gallery space as a basilica in which the outside world stays distinct from the inside space, and any element capable of interfering with the artwork is eliminated.<sup>170</sup> While the "white cube" aims to reduce visitors to eyes and minds as people within the gallery subconsciously conform to the rules that accompany the space,<sup>171</sup> favela museums prove to be places encouraging arguing, laughing, and playing as visitors and residents actively contribute to the production of meaningful connections between heritage and history, past and present. Furthermore, while nontraditional but still Western constructs such as sculpture gardens and open-air museums are concepts outside the scope of the hermetically sealed white cube, favela museums remain markedly separated from these institutions due to informal communities' marginal status, and the messy, unaltered, and lived-in condition of favela museums is a stark contrast to manicured sculpture gardens and refabricated open-air museums.

Favela museums may best be understood as manifestations of the positive results of globalization and post-colonialism due to their ability to subvert the politics of the center/periphery binary that has traditionally relegated favelas to the literal and metaphorical margins while privileging the supposedly culturally rich formal city. However, while the outside finally recognizes the favela, a space traditionally ignored by the nation-state and erected as the result of social and cultural exclusion, this recognition may render efforts to maintain locality

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<sup>170</sup> O'Doherty claims that design features like vaulted ceilings, natural light, columns, and hardwood floors help gallery spaces imitate basilicas. These devices lend to the limbo-like quality of the gallery, which O'Doherty claims is mirrored in numerous other religious and ritual settings. Museums, Egyptian tombs, and Paleolithic cave paintings are each considered as examples of sheltered spaces where the effects of change and time are minimized. Therefore, the white cube is transformed into a non-place where the claims of a specific segment of the population are ratified for eternity. Brian O'Doherty, *Inside the White Cube: The Ideology of the Gallery Space*, (San Francisco: Lapis Press, 1986), 14-26.

<sup>171</sup> Ibid., 15.

feeble, or even doomed.<sup>172</sup> Because favelas will ostensibly begin to benefit from Brazil's thriving economy and tourism industry, it is clear that new creative strategies of resistance must emerge in order to maintain favela communities as places that pay homage to the lived experiences of their residents. The dissolution of boundaries between *morro* and *asfalto* will only contribute to the favela as a community in flux as new spaces are born out of the retrieval of lost histories that revive memory and meaning as differential functions of places.<sup>173</sup>

Calling attention to the notion of the favela as a place of flux, discovery, and possibility, The Museu da Maré and the Museu de Favela carefully rearticulate informal communities as places worth remembering. Indeed, this concept of placemaking is highly egalitarian in its claim that all spaces have stories, and each of those stories deserves attention. As a result, histories are revived and recharged with the intimate memories and imaginations of the people who dwell in well-loved environments. Favela museums help ensure the preservation of local stories, but if successful, they will also inspire new stories that signify about, and help build a constituency for, place.<sup>174</sup> Combining culture, art, and a sustained interest in community, favela museums help evoke plural personal connections to place rendering environments more accessible and helping imbue places with public value. It is this sense of value that contributes to an ethic of care that makes people more responsible for their ecological environment, local history, identity, and tangible and intangible cultural heritage.<sup>175</sup>

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<sup>172</sup> Arjun Appadurai, *Modernity at Large: Cultural Dimensions of Globalization*, (Minneapolis, University of Minnesota Press, 1996), 187.

<sup>173</sup> Kwon claims that globalization has contributed to the departicularization of place as space becomes more homogenized and cultural differences are erased. Furthermore, transnational capitalism has subsumed local distinctions creating more generic spaces to accommodate neoliberal expansion, and this in turn creates a sense of placelessness that encourages the metastasis of non-places. Kwon notes that site specific artworks are sometimes criticized for their tendency to overrun the public with the meaningfulness of places and cultures, and because site is abstract and impersonal, community-specific, audience-specific, or issue-specific post-site works are often the most successful. Kwon, 157.

<sup>174</sup> Fleming, *The Art of Placemaking: Interpreting Community Through Public Art and Urban Design*, 16.

<sup>175</sup> Ibid., 28.

While the non-traditional favela museums discussed above have a diverse range of effects on the communities they inhabit, it is clear that the inauguration of culture-making institutions helps transform the way informal communities are conceptualized from the inside and outside. Through creative reappropriations of space, lively engagements of residents and tourists, and internally facilitated displays of identity, heritage, and subjectivity, the favela museums in question simultaneously subvert the dynamics of the center/periphery binary and thrive through the manipulation of processes of globalization. Indeed, these institutions tinker with the constrictions imposed upon favelas in the face of postmodern strain and globalizing sameness, and everyday events, ways of doing and being, are transformed into opportunities for favela residents to establish their own point of view in the world.

## Conclusion

In 2010, a major step was taken in the integration of the Cantagalo favela into the formal city; a sophisticated elevator system was constructed to connect the General Osorio Metro station in Ipanema with Cantagalo at the top of the hill. The elevators serve as a real and metaphorical bridge between two communities historically separated by geographic and economic barriers. However, this highly political move to finally recognize and include the favelas within the formal city of Rio de Janeiro serves as a stark contrast to events that took place one year later. In April of 2011, the *OGlobo* newspaper in Brazil publically condemned the Google Map of Rio de Janeiro claiming that the depiction gave too much prominence to the favelas. City media and local elites claimed that the map turned all of Rio into a favela, which frightened tourists and suggested negatively about the city. Eventually, Google agreed to alter the depiction rendering the city's hundreds of favelas invisible until the map is significantly enlarged; meanwhile, Sugarloaf and Christ Redeemer are clearly highlighted.<sup>176</sup> In light of the controversy, it becomes clear that the elevator complex connecting Ipanema and Cantagalo may be primarily for tourism and secondarily for inclusive public transportation. Indeed, the elevator even provides panoramic viewing decks for tourists uninterested in leaving the complex to explore the hills above.

However, while favelas remain a contentious topic in Rio de Janeiro, the concept of the favela as an authentic, lively, make-do place encouraging a similarly free-spirited lifestyle has been co-opted by restaurants, bars, and nightclubs in countries around the world. In Paris and London and Miami, clubs named Favela Chic capitalize on the Otherness, resourcefulness, and individualism connoted by Brazil's favelas. Decorated with an eclectic mix of fake palm trees,

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<sup>176</sup> "Google to amend Rio maps over Brazil favela complaints." *BBC News*, April 26, 2011, accessed November, 23, 2011, <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-latin-america-13193503>.

recycled furniture, and general bric-a-brac, the extremely successful triad does not so much pay homage to the favela as it does cast a romantic gaze in the direction of informality and co-opt its assumed aesthetic. Similar examples exist in New York, Tokyo, Sydney, and Glasgow.

However, The allure of the favela does not end with upscale entertainment; the commoditization of informality extends to high art, design, and fashion. For example, artist Marjetica Potrč commonly attempts to reconstruct the social and political dimensions of slums inside the gallery;<sup>177</sup> however, her installation-based tableaux often prove detached from reality, the product of an anthropological gaze (fig. 28).<sup>178</sup> Positing favelas as examples of triumph and nonconformity, what Potrč conceives as a shared political engagement is perhaps only a hollow appropriation, a means to an artistic end that echoes neoliberal ideology.<sup>179</sup> An even more egregious example of the commoditization of the favela, Italian designers Fernando and Humberto Campana's now infamous Favela Chair sells for US\$5,185 (fig 29). Made from Pinus wood, advertisements claim that the chair is hand glued and nailed from the same material used to construct the favelas.<sup>180</sup> The outrageous success of the Favela Chair even led the pair to create a favela-inspired bookshelf. Finally, the consumer craze extends to fashion in the form of a

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<sup>177</sup> Such was the case at the 2003 Venice Biennale exhibition, "The Structure of Survival" curated by Carlos Basualdo. Artists and architects were invited to react to the realities of insufficient housing in the developing world and the recent anthropological and sociological interests in the increasing prevalence of slums. While artists in the exhibition, including Grupo de Arte Callejero, Marepe, Yona Friedman, and Marjetica Potrč amongst others, are using art as a framework through which to understand issues of informality, it is questionable how successful these works are in mobilizing any real change. The exhibition responds to social, political, and economic crises, but perhaps the only group benefitting from the discussion of these issues inside the gallery and museum context are the artists, themselves.

<sup>178</sup> Patricio del Real, "Slums Do Stink: Artists, Bricolage, and Our Need for Doses of 'Real' Life," *Art Journal* (2008): 96.

<sup>179</sup> Potrč also collaborates with different communities in an attempt to rethink issues of sustainability through participatory design. For example, her work *Dry Toilet* is a project created in conjunction with architect Liyat Eskavow and residents of a Caracas slum that provides environmentally conscious plumbing to residents without access to water. Indeed, works like *Dry Toilet* are more responsible answers to informality than the artist's museum installations discussed above. Worth questioning in each scenario is: who is this project benefitting?

<sup>180</sup> The popular design magazine, *Elle Décor*, even encourages its readers to match their furniture to their artwork claiming that the Favela Chair would look ideal next to a Louise Nevelson sculpture. This crystallizes the fact that the favelas, home décor, and high art are commonly conflated and commoditized without reference to context. Michael Lassell, "Go Ahead: Match the Art to the Furniture," November 5, 2009, accessed March 7, 2012, [http://www.elledecor.com/interior-design-blogs/i\\_design/go\\_ahead\\_match\\_art\\_furniture](http://www.elledecor.com/interior-design-blogs/i_design/go_ahead_match_art_furniture).

popular Brazilian product, Havaiana flip-flops. The colorful rubber sandals are promoted internationally as the shoes worn by both Brazil's street children and English supermodel Kate Moss.<sup>181</sup> Now Havaianas, which sell for about US\$5 in the favelas, retail for around US\$32 in the United States, and styles embellished with Swarovski crystals sell for US\$198.

The notion of the favela as a commodity or marketing ploy only serves to further elucidate the complicated relationship between the favela and the formal community, and even more, the curious discrepancy between the treatment and conceptualization of favelas in Brazil and abroad. Regardless, through an examination of public monumental murals to rubber flip-flops, it is clear that there is no universal model through which Rio de Janeiro's favelas are effectively represented. While many of the successful projects discussed in this thesis - for example, The Morrinho Project, AfroReggae, Museu da Maré, and Museu de Favela - operate from inside informal communities through sustained interest and participation, Françoise Schein's public projects function as counterpoints, examples of successful engagement from the outside. Even more, decidedly unproductive projects like Haas&Hahn's *O Morro* still manage to precipitate meaningful discussion, and the ill-fated open-air museum in Providência even helped spearhead a bold counterargument against gentrification and displacement.

Therefore, rather than considered negotiations between artist and community or governmentally driven reflections of hard power, the affective possibilities of socially engaged projects in the favelas emerge from processes of self-representation. The issue of who is operating or initiating falls second to the matter of who is speaking. Cultural theorist Stuart Hall discusses the politics of self-representation as a process of transformation or becoming:

Identities are about questions of using the resources of history, language and culture in the process of becoming rather than being: not "who we are" or "where we came from,"

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<sup>181</sup> Freire-Medeiros, *Selling the Favela*, 10.



so much as what we might become, how we have been represented and how that bears on how we might represent ourselves.<sup>182</sup>

Indeed, while representation is a difficult and pervasive negotiation, favela residents have succeeded as social actors constructing visions, not just of self-representation, but also of self-actualization that propose alternatives to reality. Favelas are transformed into critical utopias privileging autonomy, marginality, liberation, and possibility. Therefore, projects aiming to reconsider the world through a series of alternatives simultaneously help construct the favela resident as agent and author while transcending the arbitrary, ever performed, ideological, symbolic, and actual boundaries that have historically Othered the spaces and peoples of the favela.

As the FIFA World Cup and Olympic Games near, the fate of the favelas becomes unclear due to UPP occupations and large-scale gentrification efforts, and while change is rapidly occurring, it is not always positive or beneficial. The future is unknown, but it is this instability that helps constitute informal communities as places existing through possibility rather than probability, capable of generating constant alternatives. However, as government-driven efforts strive to integrate the *asfalto* and *morro* it is worth questioning: if identities and places are always constructed as a point of opposition in reference to a pre-existing other, how will informal communities continue to self-define if they are fully integrated into the formal city? While the answer remains unclear, it seems inevitable that facile attempts to amalgamate center and periphery will only result in the rise of new margins as irresponsible projects aiming for culture-based urban development further delimit viable places for social, cultural, ethnic, and economic heterogeneity. Therefore, the survival of locality is contingent upon the favelas'

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<sup>182</sup> Stuart Hall, "Introduction: Who Needs Identity," in *Questions of Cultural Identity*, ed. Stuart Hall et al. (London: SAGE Publications, 1996), 4.

ability to simultaneously resist marginalization and propagate the notion of the favela as a place existing in constant uncertainty.

## Images



Figure 1. Michael Jackson statue in Santa Marta. Photo by John Ryan. Reproduced in <http://www.panoramio.com/photo/46042208> (Accessed March 13, 2012).



Figure 2. Christ the Redeemer, 1931. Photo by Andy Caulfield (Getty Images). Reproduced in <http://traveling-piont.blogspot.com/2011/06/christ-redeemer-in-rio-de-janeiro.html> (Accessed March 14, 2012).





Figure 3. Favelas Pavão and Pavãozinho. Rio de Janeiro, Brazil. Photo by Lindsey O'Connor. October 26, 2011.



Figure 4. View from the top of favela Rocinha juxtaposing formality and informality. Rocinha, Rio de Janeiro, Brazil. Photo by Lindsey O'Connor. October 27, 2011.



Figure 5. Gated communities in Barra da Tijuca. Reproduced in, Vincent del Rio, "Urban Design and the Future of Public Space in the Brazilian City." *Focus*, volume 1, April 2004.



Figure 6. The construction of a wall surrounding Dona Marta favela, 2009. Photo taken by Vanderlei Almeida (AFP/Getty Images). Reproduced in <http://online.wsj.com/article/SB124501964322813585.html#project%3DWALLS0906%26articleTabs%3Dinteractive> (Accessed March 13, 2012).





Figure 7. Noise wall in Rio de Janeiro's *zona norte*. Reproduced in <http://favelissues.com/2010/05/08/pac-future-plans/#more-660>. (Accessed March 13, 2012).



Figure 8. Noise wall in the Lexington, Kentucky. Reproduced in [http://www.boston.com/news/local/massachusetts/articles/2009/12/20/highway\\_barriers\\_block\\_much\\_more\\_than\\_sound/](http://www.boston.com/news/local/massachusetts/articles/2009/12/20/highway_barriers_block_much_more_than_sound/) (Accessed March 16, 2012).



Figure 9. Françoise Schein, *Caminho dos Direitos Humanos*, 2001. © Françoise Schein. Reproduced in <http://www.inscrire.com/> (Accessed March 13, 2012).



Figure 10. Lack of open space in favelas. Cantagalo, Rio de Janeiro, Brazil. Photo by Lindsey O'Connor. October 26, 2011.





Figure 11. Françoise Schein, Various Favela Projects. © Françoise Schein. Reproduced in <http://www.inscrire.com/> (Accessed March 13, 2012).



Figure 12. The Tiles Workshop – Azulejaria, 2003. © Azulejaria. Reproduced in <http://www.inscrire.com/> (Accessed March 13, 2012).



Figure 13. Françoise Schein, *Caminho dos Direitos Humanos*, 2003. © Françoise Schein. Reproduced in <http://www.inscrire.com/> (Accessed March 13, 2012).





Figure 14. Haas&Hahn, *O Morro*, 2010. Haas&Hahn for favelapainting.com. Reproduced in <http://www.favelapainting.com/santa-marta> (Accessed March 13, 2012).



Figure 15. “Unity” The Original Members of Team Morrinho, Photo taken November 29, 2005. Reproduced in <http://www.flickr.com/photos/projetomorrinho/4060943298/in/photostream/> (Accessed on March 13, 2012).





Figure 16. “Motorcycle Parked” (detail of Morrinho). Photo taken October 31, 2009. Reproduced in <http://www.flickr.com/photos/projetomorrinho/4060965932/in/photostream> (Accessed on March 24, 2012).



Figure 17. AfroReggae. Reproduced in <http://culturalplayingfield.wordpress.com/2010/03/30/points-of-contact-visit-to-brazil/> (Accessed March 14, 2012).



Figure 18. Stilt houses in the Maré complex, 1971. Reproduced in <http://translate.google.com/translate?hl=en&sl=pt&tl=en&u=http%3A%2F%2Fwww.vanhoni.com.br%2F2009%2F04%2Fmuseu-da-mare-rio-de-janeiro-memoria-e-cidadania%2F&anno=2> (Accessed March 14, 2012).



Figure 19. A box of shells collected by residents. Museu da Maré. Reproduced in <http://translate.google.com/translate?hl=en&sl=pt&tl=en&u=http%3A%2F%2Fwww.vanhoni.com.br%2F2009%2F04%2Fmuseu-da-mare-rio-de-janeiro-memoria-e-cidadania%2F&anno=2> (Accessed March 14, 2012).





Figure 20. *Palafita*. Museu da Maré. Reproduced in <http://translate.google.com/translate?hl=en&sl=pt&tl=en&u=http%3A%2F%2Fwww.vanhoni.com.br%2F2009%2F04%2Fmuseu-da-mare-rio-de-janeiro-memoria-e-cidadania%2F&anno=2> (Accessed March 14, 2012).

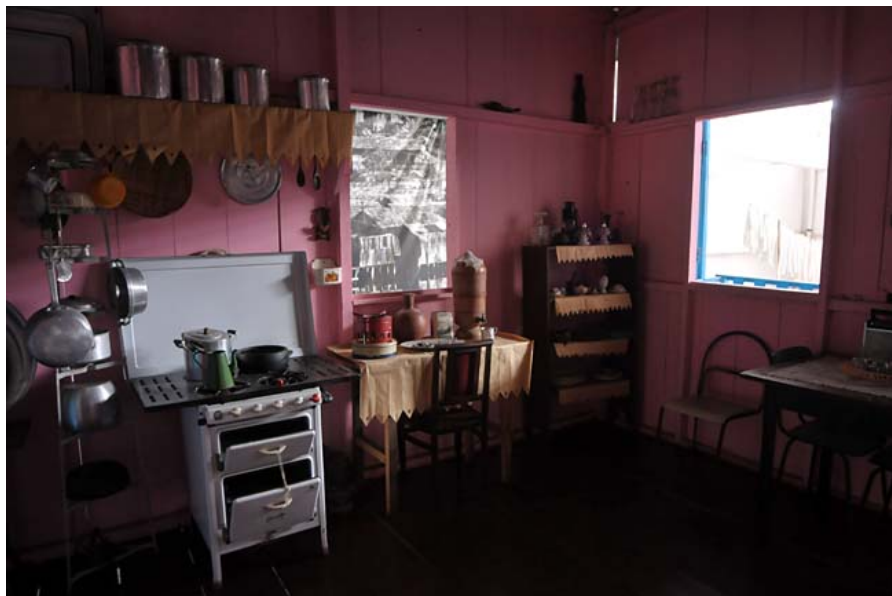


Figure 21. The inside of the *palafita* is decorated with items donated by community members. Museu da Maré. Reproduced in <http://translate.google.com/translate?hl=en&sl=pt&tl=en&u=http%3A%2F%2Fwww.vanhoni.com.br%2F2009%2F04%2Fmuseu-da-mare-rio-de-janeiro-memoria-e-cidadania%2F&anno=2> (Accessed March 14, 2012).



Figure 22. View from the top of Morro da Cantagalo showing the stark difference between *morro* and *asfalto*. Cantagalo, Rio de Janeiro, Brazil. Photo by Lindsey O'Connor. October 26, 2011.



Figure 23. Lack of indoor plumbing, Museu de Favela. Cantagalo, Rio de Janeiro, Brazil. Photo by Lindsey O'Connor. October 26, 2011.





Figure 24. Foreground: Museu de Favela mural in Cantagalo, Background: favelas Pavão and Pavãozinho. Cantagalo, Rio de Janeiro, Brazil. Photo by Lindsey O'Connor. October 26, 2011.



Figure 25. Marble pathway through the Morro da Providência's open-air museum. Reproduced in <http://favelissues.com/2010/05/06/%E2%80%9Cfollow-the-yellow-brick-road%E2%80%9D-morro-da-providencia%E2%80%99s-open-air-museum/> (Accessed March 14, 2012).



Figure 26. Maurício Hora, In Providência, the community collaboratively pastes large-scale self-portraits on at-risk houses. Reproduced in <http://www.cultureisyourweapon.com/2011/06/providencia-inside-out/#comments> (Accessed March 14, 2012).



Figure 27. Maurício Hora, In Providência, a detail of Hora's finished product. Reproduced in <http://www.cultureisyourweapon.com/2011/06/providencia-inside-out/#comments> (Accessed March 14, 2012).





Figure 28. Marjetica Potrč, *Caracas: House with Extended Territory*, 2003. Galerie Nordenhake. Berlin, Germany. Reproduced in <http://www.nordenhake.com/php/exhibition.php?id=48&year=2004> (Accessed March 14, 2012).



Figure 29. Humberto and Fernando Campana, *Favela Chair*, 2003. Reproduced in [http://melissadixson.typepad.com/melissa\\_dixson\\_taxidermis/fab-furniture/](http://melissadixson.typepad.com/melissa_dixson_taxidermis/fab-furniture/) (Accessed March 14, 2012).



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